IT'S SMART TO BE GEOPOLITICAL . . . By Robert Strausz-Hupe

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THE
Saturday Review
OF LITERATURE

VOLUME XXVI No. 6 NEW YORK, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1943 FIFTEEN CENTS

"THE CONSPIRATORS"
by Frederic Prokosch
Reviewed by R. Ellis Roberts

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"HOW TO WRITE"
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"WRITING THE SHORT SHORT STORY"
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"THE TRAGICAL HISTORY OF CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE"
by John Bakeless
Reviewed by Henry W. Wells

"BASIS FOR PEACE IN THE FAR EAST"
by Nathaniel Peffer
Reviewed by Mark Gayn

FREDERIC PROKOSCH has stripped for action in "The Conspirators." (See page 6)

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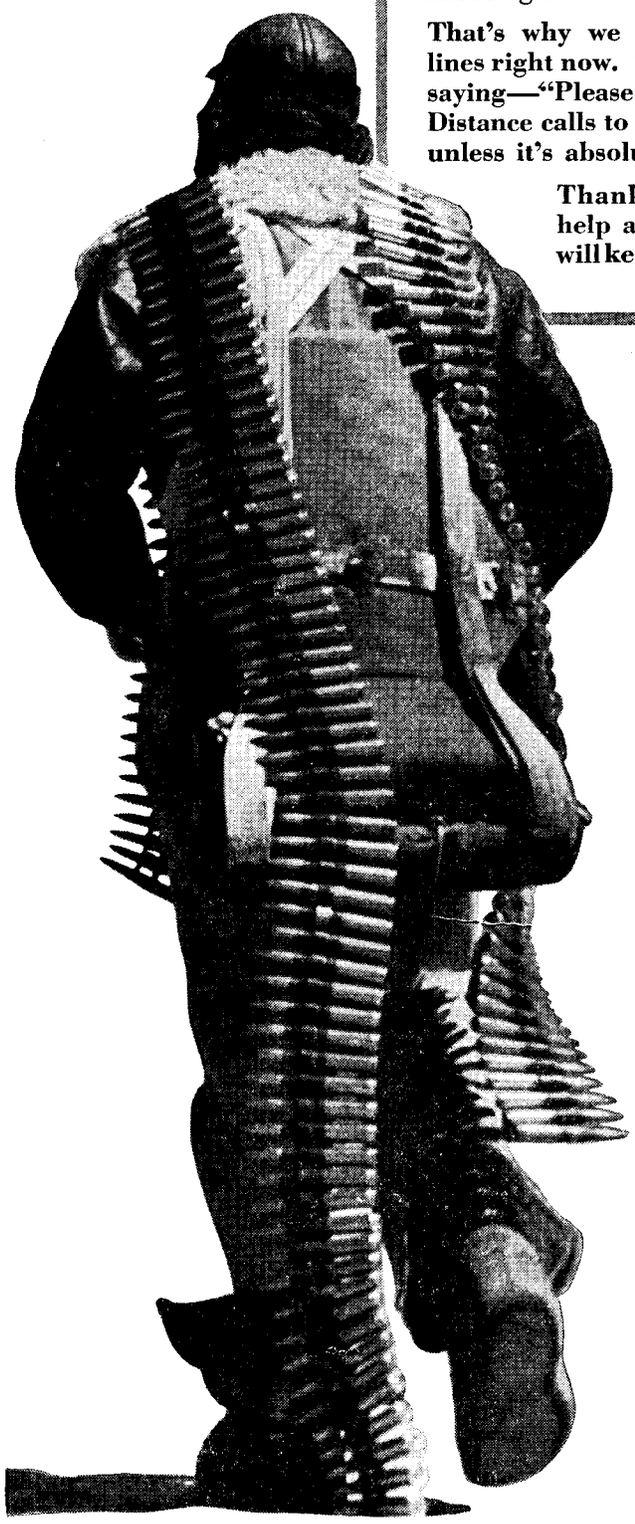

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The Saturday Review of Literature

It's Smart to Be Geopolitical

ROBERT STRAUSZ-HUPÉ

THE NAZI STATE. By William Ebenstein. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1943. 342 *pp.* $2.75.

GERMAN STRATEGY OF WORLD CONQUEST. By Derwent Whittlesey. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1942. 269 *pp., and bibliography.* $2.50.

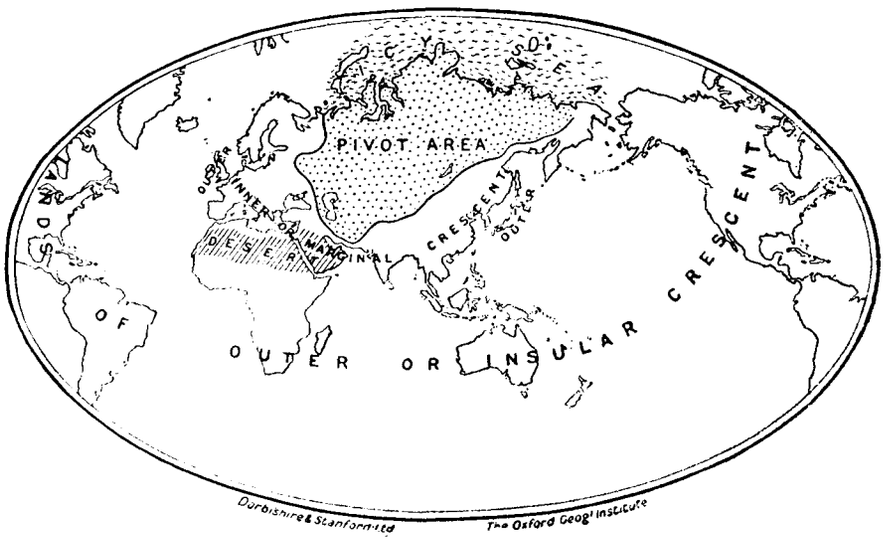
THE WORLD OF GENERAL HAUSHOFER. By Andreas Dorpalen. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1942. 329 *pp., and index.* $3.50.

THE present boom in discussions on geopolitics bears an embarrassing resemblance to the Technocracy bubble of a decade ago. Then the Great Depression posed a complex problem in economics. The public craved the assurance of a simple answer, and Technocracy professed to give it—categorically. Technocracy—like contract bridge—was designed as a system, and—like Buchmanism—proferred special revelations to the proselytes. Technocracy—essentially a vulgarization of Thorsten Veblen's pungent ideas—now reposes in the cabinets of freaks and fads. Similarly, geopolitics is now put forth in all-out terms as the key to the most complex problems of international relations. Moreover, it is bitterly ironic that the fundamentals of American policy for the years to come should be thus linked—indeed, built upon—German geopolitics, a science circumscribed by at least thirty-three German definitions. Yet that is where the discussion center of geopolitical gravity seems to be today.

Geopolitics is concerned with the relationship of the state to its geographical environment. But it is also concerned with power. A spacious realm, a strategic location and ample natural resources are basic requirements of power. If the German geopoliticians had contented themselves with the scientific investigation of these requirements they might have remained comparatively unknown—and geopolitics might not have become the subject of an American controversy. But geopolitics, according to Dr. Whittlesey's quotations from authoritative German statements, "asks an outspoken *dynamic* question," is "the basis for understanding history," and "is interested in space requirements with the outspoken aim of finding *norms* for the behavior of the state in *ever increasing* space." Characteristically, General Haushofer himself likes this definition best: "Geopolitics is the geographic conscience of the State." In short, geopolitics tells us what power is *and* how to use it.

There has existed for some time a large body of European literature which can be labelled geopolitics. Much of this literature, but by no means all of it, was German, and most of the German theories on the subject were fully developed long before Hitler came to power. All of this literature remained virtually unnoticed by Americans with the exception of a handful of geographers and soldiers. The awakening of the American public to global consciousness created a ready market for "systems" of global politics. In the absence of any similar competitive product, geopolitics became the raging fashion.

German geopolitics is a mechanistic interpretation of history; hence its popular appeal not only in Germany, but everywhere. Because power, unvarnished power, has not exactly had a good press in this country the advocates of "realism," *i.e.,* the straightforward use of power, in United States foreign policy, referred to power politics mainly by circumlocution. They now find in geopolitics a felicitous terminology couched in the language of the natural sciences. Geopolitics—as a scientific discipline—now disposes of a large following of professors and publicistis. It is not unnatural that the American geopoliticians have tried to cut the umbilical cord which binds their science—American geopolitics—to the great mother German Geopolitik. By the looks of current writings they have none too well succeeded in this operation, and the odium of German heredity still clings to the American variant. Much of the prevailing confusion is due to the fact that the issue has nowhere been clearly stated: there is geopolitics; German Geopolitik; and American geopolitics. The first is a discipline; the second a plan for German world conquest; the third is a doctrine of American power-politics. Current writings mostly fail to discriminate between these three different, if also related, kinds of geopolitics, and some of the blows levelled at the discipline and Herr Haushofer are meant to discomfit the advocates of American Realpolitik. And it is the last-named



—*From "The World of General Haushofer."*

The "natural seats of power," as viewed by the Nazis.

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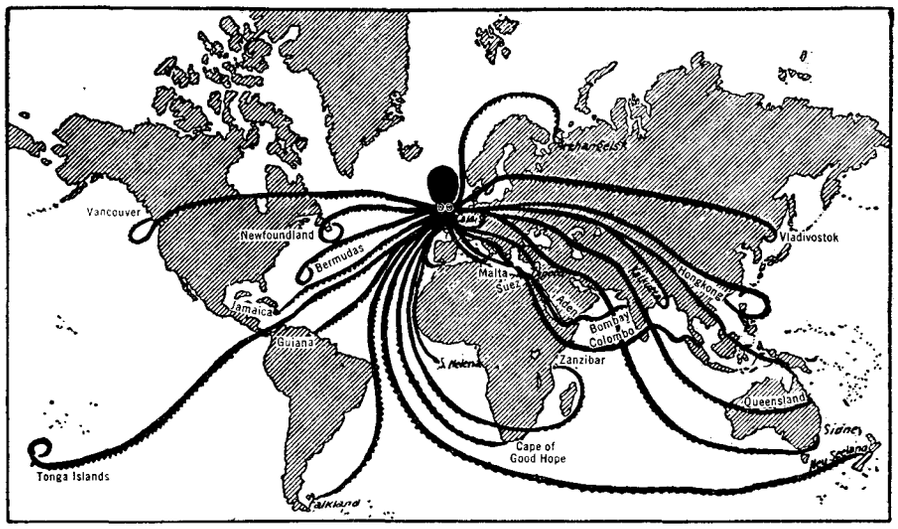
version of geopolitics which is really the hub of the current controversy.

THE confusion has not been lessened by the recent competition in revealing the truth about German Geopolitik. Earlier flashy write-ups of Haushofer's mysterious science were later followed by learned discourses on the transcendent meaning of Haushoferism. A destiny-laden concept of the universe—a *Weltanschaung*—is now said to permeate Geopolitik. Haushofer writes an atrociously involved German and most Geopolitikers affect an ambiguous or obscure mode of expression. Some of this reveals little about Geopolitik, but much about the intellectual climate of Germany. In Germany, scholarly snobbery is apt to be taken for profundity. Some of the Geopolitikers—not excluding Haushofer—merely conform to prevailing German literary standards. Yet some of the foreign interpreters of Geopolitik have discovered a history-shaking significance where some sober translator has found only incredibly involved Germanisms.

No more helpful are clever speculations as to the hidden relationship between Haushofer and Hitler, Haushofer and the German Army, Haushofer and Russia. There is plenty of evidence that Geopolitik is a powerful school of thought in Nazi Germany; but there is none to show—as is now being alleged—that Haushofer and the German army clashed with Hitler and the Nazi party over the issue of peace or war with Russia. Haushofer, speaking for the German army as well as for Geopolitik, is said to have championed collaboration with the Soviets. Hitler—according to this version—defied the precepts of Geopolitik and attacked Russia.

This interpretation ignores a fact which by now should be abundantly clear, namely that the army in Germany, just as in other totalitarian countries, is at the disposal of the totalitarian leader. The German army is subservient to the Nazi regime because it lacks an ideology which could attract the German masses. It is a monstrous machine, it has no will of its own. General Haushofer, an astute judge of what is and is not possible in world politics, may have—in his heart—opposed the attack upon Russia; it is highly improbable that he or any other General went to bat with Hitler over foreign policy. Moreover, wanton as was Germany's aggression against Russia, the question remains as to whether Hitler acted as a free agent or whether the clash of German and Russian interests in the Baltic and Southeastern Europe had not made war inevitable, whether the attack upon Russia was not Germany's part in the bargain with Japan. The secrets of German-Russian relations are buried in Hitler's archives. We probably will never know the truth, for the chances are that these archives will be blown sky high either by Allied bombs or by the Nazis themselves.



—*From "The World of General Haushofer."*

A Nazi view of British power at the outset of the war.

It is the outstanding merit of Dr. Whittlesey's book that it arrays a wealth of factual information, gathered from German sources, into a coherent statement of Geopolitik, its genesis and teachings. It does not lose itself in speculations on what role Geopolitik played on the backstairs of the Brown House. It presents an admirably compact summary of German geopolitical thought and lets the Geopolitikers, notably Haushofer, speak for themselves. Even without the aid of lush interpretation, the Geopolitikers are shown as remarkably prescient diagnosticians of international politics. Their conclusions as to future trends in certain areas—particularly the British Empire and the Far East—are too closely born out by subsequent events to be brushed aside as lucky guesses. They were based on tireless research work of encyclopedic range. It is this, the less spectacular side of Geopolitik, which deserves closer study than its *Weltanschaung*. For here are found clues not only to German planning, but also valuable lessons for fact-finding organizations of our own. Here, indeed, we could have learned from the enemy, and here—one may presume—we did learn, if also somewhat belatedly. Some of the research organizations now functioning within the framework of our national defense are engaged in geopolitical research all but in name.

Drs. Whittlesey and Hartshorne, distinguished American geographers, were familiar with Geopolitik long before the present boom. They painstakingly examined the German sources. They wrestled with, and got the better of, the German terminology. Their book provides a badly needed glossary and a compilation of cartographic symbols. Geopolitik looms large in German education; its most effective educational device is the geopolitical map—the map which points a political lesson. Dr. Whittlesey's book presents a selection of the dynamic maps and pictographs which adorn German geopolitical publications. Some of these maps successfully convey such political concepts as "encirclement," "expansion," and "pressure," some are crude and cluttered up with pointless "symbols." Notwithstanding Haushofer's preoccupation with maps, the cartographers of Geopolitik stuck largely to conventional projections. There is no German geopolitical map which can rival the magnificent maps drawn by the American cartographer, Richard Harrison, the artful foe of the "Mercator mind." It is perhaps due to Haushofer's "Mercator-mindedness" that he failed to grasp the strategic importance of the Arctic and, hence, some crucial facts concerning the proximity of the Eurasian "Heartland" to the North American continent.

The greatest virtue of Whittlesey's work is its comprehensiveness and its detachment. Less sure is its evaluation of the roots of Geopolitik in German history. Geopolitik is, to Dr. Whittlesey, not only the last phase in the history of German expansionism; expansionism (Dr. Whittlesey seems here to accept Lord Vansittart's thesis of German wickedness throughout the ages), is also a specific and age-old German urge to subjugate the world. In the twentieth century, foreign policy grows from the internal structure of a nation. It is therefore a precarious undertaking to venture upon comparisons between the present and the past

(*Continued on page* 20)

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Frederic Prokosch's Heightened Values

THE CONSPIRATORS. By Frederic Prokosch. New York: Harper & Bros. 1943. 338 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by R. ELLIS ROBERTS

MR. Prokosch has moved a good way from the manner of his first novel "The Asiatics": moved indeed from the richness, the rather extravagant variety still to be found in the story just before this, "The Skies of Europe." He has stripped for action, as it were; and the relics of his romantic, imaginative, highly-colored manner are rather sinister in this story of murder—a story that recalls Koestler, even if it stems from Dostoievsky.

The scene of "The Conspirators" is finely conceived and brilliantly presented. It is Lisbon in 1940—Lisbon which, after the fall of France, became the hope and despair of refugees from all over Europe, and became—as it has presumably remained—the centre of international espionage. Mr. Prokosch, on the whole, succeeds very well in avoiding the temptation of bending his talent to the making of a tale of mere intrigue and violent action. That he does not avoid melodrama is partly due to the fact that life in Lisbon was melodramatic and partly because he takes, to my mind, a thoroughly melodramatic view of his "villain," the German spy, Hugo von Mohr. As he analyzes this man's character, I find it difficult to believe that Hugo could have succeeded for twenty-four hours as a servant of the Nazi secret service; or that he would ever have lulled the suspicions of the simple Russians, of the idealistic Dutchman, or the fanatical Spaniard who accept him as a comrade.

Fortunately the virtue of "The Conspirators" does not reside in the portrait of Hugo. The book opens with the escape from prison—where he is being held at the secret request of the Germans and apparently uncharged—of Vincent van der Lyn. The story is Van der Lyn's story. He has an intuitive conviction that the treachery done to him is but one act in a series; and he is determined, when he escapes, to stop the series. His motive is not revenge, not idealism, not anger: it is at once simple and subtle. A man, he knows not who, is working for the enemy while pretending to work for the Allies—a man is in the wrong place, and must be removed. That is simple. Behind that is Vincent's conviction that the death of that man is a debt he owes to humanity.

The action of the story is only some few hours. The pace of the book is quick. There is, for those who want it, a strong suspense—the suspense of the chase. Especially vivid is Mr. Prokosch's power to render the unreasonable apprehension of his chief characters; and to emphasize it by contrast with the trivialities of the rich and selfish idlers who sit at the play, so deadly, so alarming, twittering with fear that they too may hear the cry of the call-boy and be swept on to the bloody stage.

There is a fine mounting excitement, a heightening of values as the story draws to its end—and nowhere is Mr. Prokosch's skill more admirably shown than in the contrast between the dinner party at the Count's where Hugo makes his last public appearance, and the brief scene outside the Casino where Vincent meets an old Parisian friend, a worldly, cynical flaneur whose triviality has been stripped from him by the betrayal of his country. If it were only for old Pellincour's passionate defense of the true France this would be a memorable book; and a sentence of his might be the motive of "The Conspirators": "Only when men have forgotten how to suffer does life become horrible!"

Helen Howe

Four Women, One Man, and Boston

THE WHOLE HEART. By Helen Howe. New York: Simon & Schuster. 315 *pp.* 1943. $2.50.

Reviewed by BESS JONES

LIKE other highly respectable family strains, the novel of letters or diaries—or a mixture of both—usually boasts better ancestry than descendants. Miss Howe's addition to the line, if not exactly a sport, nevertheless offers fairly convincing denial that its vigor has altogether died out. As a successful and enjoyable monologuist (Miss Howe has one of the loveliest voices and one of the most engaging stage manners in the profession), she understands not merely the prime role of character creation and the art of implication, but the achievement of intensity through almost relentless concentration on one incident and one figure at a time.

Four women who have loved one man tell the story. They differ greatly. The first, a distant cousin, attracts him by her tender sympathy, her self-effacement, idealism, and quiet steadiness in a world offering little integration to an officer just out of World War I. The second meets his only half-defined yearning for the more flashy trappings of worldly success as the turgid twenties interpreted it. The third, possessing neither the unquestioning innocence of the first nor the materialism of the second, brings to her relationship with him a kind of emotional maturity and intellectual awareness that belong to no pattern he can understand or accept; and the fourth, a daughter of the Main Line (Bryn Mawr '32), one of those vigorous virgins with healthy hobbies for enlarging Leica films, athletically swoops him up as her prize trophy.

And what sort of man is he who can not only attract such sturdy women but command their loyalty after he has discarded them? He is a writer. He has charm. He is another of those Boston males à la Marquand who don't know precisely what they want but are afraid of it when they get it. He can't live in Boston, but he never quite escapes from it. He professes to dislike being pushed around by women, but whenever he encounters one who faintly intimates that she is more interested in a lover and a husband than a son, he runs in panic to spit her out in the nearest mother-substitute's hand. Mr. Marquand laughs at him, a shade wryly to be sure, but he laughs. Miss Howe, like her four heroines, and for that matter, like women novelists in general, pampers him. Yet for all the vast outlay of emotion on him, she never quite convinces the reader either that he is entirely real or that all of his ladies would remain so utterly blind to his moral cowardice. Nor does she give inevitability to his ultimate choice. That is contrived, as he himself is contrived, for purposes of very entertaining, skillful (if not too subtle) monologue sketches of four prodigal women and a man against a background of a rapidly deteriorating social order.

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Sold Down the River

BENEATH ANOTHER SUN. By Ernst Lothar. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc. 1943. 419 *pp.* $2.75.

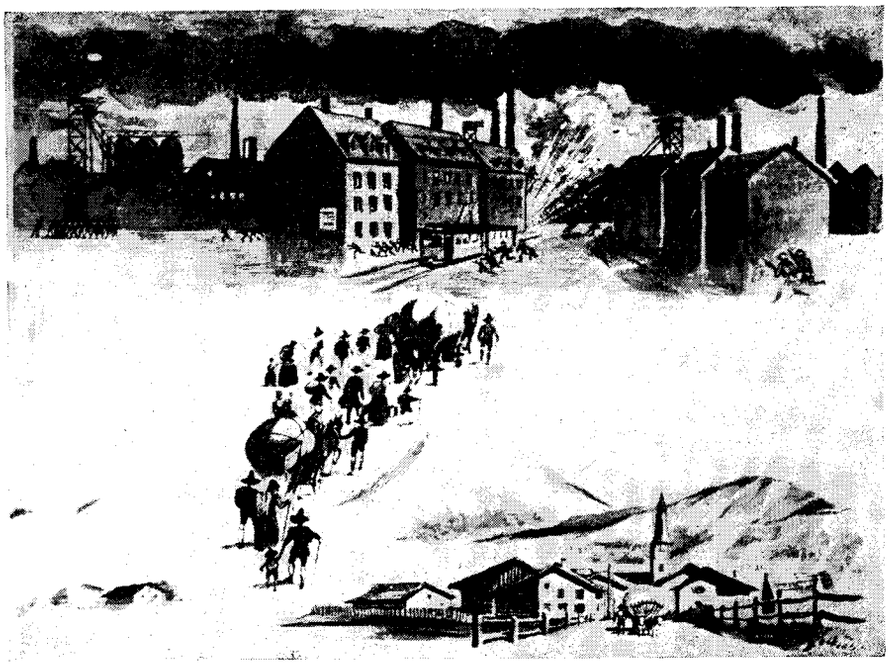
Reviewed by ROBERT PICK

IN no single case did Herr Hitler do greater violence to his own program than in that of the German-speaking Austrians of the South Tyrol. From the early twenties, the post-1918 situation of these freedom-loving and proud men and women —descendants of the rebels who, in 1809, dared to defy, practically single-handed, Napoleon's new European order—had attracted widespread sympathy among the Western nations; for it soon became apparent how ruthlessly Il Duce's régime was doing away with the mitigating clauses of the treaties which had placed 250,000 persons under a foreign yoke. The Nazis, on the other hand, displayed from the outset a conspicuous indifference to their fate. In 1939, the Führer coolly sold them down the river—in the very days when he was about to unleash the Polish campaign over the "unbearable sufferings" of his Danzig fellow-Germans.

The agreement between the Axis partners which was to "solve" the problem is undoubtedly one of the most cynical documents of totalitarian *Realpolitik.* It left to the South Tyrolese the option either to "return" to the Reich immediately or to be settled by the Fascist government somewhere in Southern Italy. In either case it remained at the discretion of the authorities to do whatever they should please with the unfortunate people, whose families had dwelt in the lovely Alpine valleys for over a thousand years. Moreover, the choice was not entirely free: the Italian rulers were entitled to deprive of Italian citizenship, and to expel to Germany, whoever they might consider "undesirable."

As that infamous decree almost coincided with the outbreak of the European war, only little news of its execution has reached the outside world since. A book dealing with the subject should be all the more welcome. Mr. Lothar, an exiled Austrian novelist, is not only thoroughly familiar with the scene and with the psychology of European minorities, but he also has apparently succeeded in collecting much unknown, or at least thus far overlooked, material.

The exposition of his novel is excellent. Andreas Mumelter, young scion of a patrician family of artisans, returns from a three years' stay in Germany to his native town of Bozen. By no means pleased with what he has chanced to see abroad, his first reaction to the Fascist-Nazi ukase is one of utter defiance. Desperately looking about for help, he meets Mr. Hoffman, a wealthy Salzburg-born American, and his daughter, and takes a hand in an abortive revolt. Naturally, he is caught and earmarked for deportation together with his nonagenarian grandfather, his pregnant sister, and his kid brother. The departure of the group brings Part One of the novel to a touching climax. The reader looks forward to getting, as promised, the story of a transplanted people.



—*From the book*

But actually, Part Two gives but another underground story from Czechoslovakia. The Mumelters are separated from the rest of the Bozen folk, who, henceforth, are only occasionally referred to as "settled somewhere near the Moravian border." They are shipped to Pilsen, where both Andreas, a trained engineer, and father Hoffman, an inventor by profession, find employment with the Skoda armament factory. For Mr. Hoffman, who by some technicality has failed to become an American citizen and therefore can no longer leave the Reich, has joined the exiles —to his daughter's delight, as hardly need be added. Andreas, in his desire for revenge, gets involved in the Czech underground work.

It would be unfair to the author to reveal more of his intricate plot. Suffice it to say that, despite the stereotyped nature of the main characters, the story is vividly told and packed with action. An abundance of minute detail manages fairly well to balance the fantastic and melodramatic elements of the yarn. Considering, however, Mr. Lothar's talent as a narrator, his obvious competence, and his elaborate studies, it seems a pity that he has not written the much less colorful and less "breathless," but certainly far more moving saga of cruelly uprooted peasants and burghers who, in the midst of an ununderstandably amorphous "order," have to adapt themselves to the necessities of their new life. The steadfastness of both their hatred and their faith remains our ardent hope. "Reports" on spectacular conspiracies among them, no matter how well done and how skillfully interspersed with authentic documents, remain little more than exciting reading.

Julia Ellsworth Ford Foundation Awards

The Julia Ellsworth Ford Foundation has announced its tenth annual children's book contest, with a $1,250 award offered for the best juvenile book manuscript submitted during the contest, which closes at midnight, March 31st, 1943.

Judges for the 1943 contest will be May Lamberton Becker, of the *N. Y. Herald Tribune;* Ruth Ann Waring, manager of the Children's Book Department of Marshall Field & Company in Chicago; and Ellen Lewis Buell, editor of the Children's Book Page of the *N. Y. Times.*

Brochures detailing all conditions of the offer and entry blanks which are necessary to compete can be obtained by addressing Helen Hoke, Executive Director of the Julia Ellsworth Ford Foundation, 8 West 40th Street, New York City.

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Writing for Money

HOW TO WRITE. By Stephen Leacock. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1943. 261 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by STRUTHERS BURT

THIS is a lovely book because it is both witty and wise; the only combination, of course, so far discovered, that produces actual humor. Indeed, it is doubtful, such being the incongruities of life, if one can be truly wise without being witty; he can be learned but not wise; and there is no doubt at all that no one can be really funny—consciously—unless he's well supplied with both intelligence and experience. As Professor Leacock himself implies, Euclid was one of the few historical characters of any worth who could afford invariably to keep a straight face.

The title is formidable—"How To Write" sounds like another one of those curious books designed in all seriousness to teach for two dollars and fifty cents, the mysteries of a largely unteachable profession. But let no reader be deterred even if he, or she, be one of that large and fortunate majority who "wouldn't write if he, or she, could." Ring Lardner used much the same title for the best book he ever wrote, which is saying a lot. The title is merely a stalking-horse for the ripe philosopher and wit of Ontario to say what he thinks of his vocation, whether he denies that noun or not—his avocation is teaching political economy, and he can even be funny about that—; and about literature in general, and life, and literary style, and above all the English language, that major instrument of beauty and common sense, and civilization and articulateness.

And yet it's a good text book; an excellent one. Actually, a superb one, which should be on the desk of every teacher of English who has the sense to appreciate it. It should also be on the desks of all those who wish to be writers, and especially on the desks of all those who are.

As for the rest, they should buy it and read it and be pleased, and not infrequently stirred, by the fact that all along without knowing it, like Molière's Monsieur Jourdain, mentioned in this connection on page one hundred and seventy-six of the book, they "have been talking prose," and not infrequently poetry, and invariably some sort of grammar.

Words are exciting. They excite almost everybody. And the more you know about them, the more excited you become. They should be exciting, for a man, or woman, after all is nothing but a little blood and water, plus nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and connectives. Language is whatever there is of a soul and its sole articulate expression.

All this, and much more, is in this "How To Write." One would like to go on, and one would like to quote. There are unforgettable statements that bubble up from seriousness—Stephen Leacock is very impassioned about the English language, as who isn't who really knows it—like those clear bright air-pockets that rise from a deep, continuing spring. How "nice" in its original sense, and how "nice" in its modern one the statement that, "Humble people, like the Canadians, and the Eskimos, have to live in America and speak English, without fretting about it," and how equally nice is Stephen Leacock's confession that as for himself, he speaks "Ontario English," which he doesn't admire, but which is all he can do.

He has a mind that cannot resist its own enchantment, and so he enchants other minds, among them definitely my own. Devoting several extremely scholarly paragraphs to the subtleties of Greek and Latin, and the comparative simplicity of English, he describes the prefix and suffix and gives a list of the latter; "hatless, coatless, breathless" but ends up with "pantless." Which, he very justly says, were we as unnecessarily subtle as the Greeks, would be called the Separative Case, to the delight and confusion of scholars, "as used to show that the thing indicated is not there . . . having no pants."

Stephen Leacock

THE CRAFT OF NOVEL WRITING. By Nineteen Authors. Edited by A. S. Burack. Boston: The Writer. 1942. 225 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by PHIL STONG

THE three blind men who disagreed about the elephant should have written a symposium on the novel. One of these unsighted gentlemen, it will be recalled, grabbed the elephant's tail and said the animal was like a rope; another got a leg and said it was like a tree; the third bumped into its side and said it was like a wall. That would be about the condition of three Martians, one of whom read a novel called "Tristram Shandy," another "Huckleberry Finn," and a third "A Lost Lady" or "Ethan Frome."

The safest definition is that a novel is a piece of narrative long enough to make a book. This would seem to include the Book of Genesis and Homer's "Iliad," but why not? Practically everything has been called a novel, "Swann's Way," "Finnegans Wake," and some of the ramblings of Gertrude Stein, so who is Moses to get excited, or Homer?

In spite of the fact that these articles from a writers' journal deal, so to speak, with the care and feeding of a chimera, some of the suggestions are interesting and some are useful. I am not greatly excited by an account of Mr. Gingrich's working methods, for no two writers of my acquaintance have the same method, and I have at least a dozen all by myself. Not only is one man's meat another man's poison, but there are same days when one wants pork chops and some days when one does not.

The same consideration is only partially true of Charles Munz's good article on primary construction. He takes a theme of perhaps only a sentence or two and then expands and elaborates it by easy stages till he has a full structure. This sounds feasible, in general. Personally, I like to write from character—choose some people, choose a jam for them to be in, and then let them worry the novel out. This doesn't make for clean structure but it is lots of fun.

Julian Green has an excellent piece of belles lettres, "A Novelist Begins." He is, to some degree at least, in accord with this latter system. "The question is not, 'Can I invent a story worth writing?' but 'Can I create characters capable of actions worth recording?'" The soundest observation in the book and the most useful,

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if anyone would listen to it, is that all the instruction and effort in the world are worthless without "the help of that magic and apparently gratuitous gift—talent." As Carl Van Doren, who knows, once advised this reviewer, "You either have the right chromosomes, or you don't."

Thames Williamson has a good but disappointing chapter on the use of dialect; disappointing because his ability deserved a larger topic. The gist of his remarks is, Use sparingly. This might be modified slightly—as a substantial device dialect is sometimes effective, as with Uncle Remus or the big Yorkshireman in "Nicholas Nickleby"; as a casual accessory it is likely to seem artificial and there is always some danger of confusion.

About half of the book is given over to purely practical discussions of specialized types of novels, mysteries, Westerns, shockers, historicals. As might be expected, Zelda Popkin has an amusing warning to mystery writers to watch their technical details; the section is called, "Corpses Can't Leer." They can't, of course, and that peaceful smile that Mr. Dickens plants on favored cadavers is phoney, too. This reviewer or any other old police reporter could tell the whodunnit carpenters that, since the facial muscles are relaxed, corpses can only look blank, or, at most, show mild surprise with mouth and eyes.

How did we get on this subject?

The Art of the Short Shorts

WRITING THE SHORT SHORT STORY. Edited by Sylvia E. Kamerman. Boston: The Writer, Inc. 1942. 174 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by S. T. BURTWELL

THIS is an excellent and concise textbook, and the first, so far as I know, to deal exclusively with what we Americans, with our love of technical terms, call "Short Shorts." Miss Kamerman, associate editor of *The Writer,* has approached her project from the proper angle; that is, she has asked eleven authorities to state cogently and briefly their experience. These authorities range from such well-known practitioners as Ben Ames Williams to George Freitag, not as yet so well known, but a distinguished writer, very much so, and to no less a person than Walter S. Campbell (Stanley Vestal) who, in addition to being in the top rank of his particular subject, history and fiction of the Southwest, is Director of the Professional Writing School of the University of Oklahoma.

To mention the headings of some of the twelve chapters included in Miss Kamerman's book will be to give the clearest idea of it. Chapter one, for example, is entitled "Essentials of the Short Short Story"; chapter two, "The Mechanics of the Short Short Story"; chapter four, "The Genesis of a Short Short Story"; chapter seven, "Analysis of a *Collier's* Short Short Story," and so on. The book will be of essential value to all those, a legion, engaged in the teaching of "practical" writing, and it will be bought, no doubt, by all those, an even larger number, who wish to write. Meanwhile, paradoxically enough, but a paradox well understood by professional writers, the book's chief value and interest will be to those already well along in their profession.

Writing, like painting, only more so, and unlike music, and almost everything else, is a self-taught profession, a question of rule of thumb, profit and loss, trial and error, and its essential tools, only the last of which can be purchased or borrowed, outside of a good book on rhetoric, a subject no longer taught, are first, the essential qualities that make a writer; to wit, a vigorous passion for life, the observation that is part of this, imagination, and vicariousness; and second, obstinacy, continuous work, and a pair of reinforced trousers. Writing, therefore, cannot be learned from textbooks, however excellent, and such textbooks, and the more practical they are, the more this is so, are of real use only to those who teach writing and to the practising students of it who may wish to check up on good or bad habits. Even the terms necessarily used mean nothing until one has worked with them for some time. "Characterization," "atmosphere," "plot," "construction," and so on, so clear and definite to the professional writer in their connotations, are vague and cloudy terms to the beginner. On the other hand, if he has the germ of story-telling in him it will develop. Thomas Carlyle said the last word on the subject when he said that if you had something to say, you would find a way of saying it.

The only possible way of assisting the aspiring writer, and even then the assistance is strictly limited, is by personal contact between teacher and student and the treatment of each manuscript as an individual psychologic and artistic phenomenon. Nor can this be done even by correspondence, and I am sure all teachers of writing will agree with me. But Americans with their starry-eyed materialism and their conviction that wishing, minus arduous work, will accomplish anything, obstinately refuse to accept such simple facts of life and are convinced that you can learn charm from a book of etiquette and acquire steadfast friends by coldbloodedly memorizing a few rules you should know in the beginning. As a nation we have a passion for putting the cart before the horse emotionally and artistically, graphs before content, technique before the heart of a matter, and soap before love, unaware that although you can teach a man not to eat with his knife, you cannot teach him to be an agreeable table companion, and unware that personal hygiene, although excellent, should be regarded as a question of inner satisfaction and not as a method of acquiring dangerous lovers. Our point of view does not even take into consideration the age-long mystery of what a bore is, and why, and that no perfume will disguise him. This comes, I think, from our historical pattern which has led us to confuse imponderables with such definite matters as learning to run a lathe. But a great mental upheaval is now upon us and a spiritual rending, and perhaps out of them will come an actual sense of values.

This is an immense thesis, almost a matter of national salvation, and it has directly to do with the American short story and the sad estate into which it has fallen. The American short story started as something important, and for a while it was important, but for the past twenty years, except in a few corners, it has been less than nothing; at its best, an ingenious scenario for a novel—the long 6,000 word story of the "slicks"—or an affectation, the average story of the "quality" magazines; at its worst-a back-somersault. And this is a wicked thing, for it damages communication, the one hope of mankind and civilization. There are many signs, however, that the audience, the mythical "public," is running away from the editors. It invariably does, although the editors do not as yet know what the trouble is.

A "Short Short" is nothing, of

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course, but a short story, perhaps the best form of one because it is short; and a short story is nothing but a single mood adhered to, in contra-distinction to a novel or a long short story, known as a conte. But the mood is of no value whatsoever unless it is honest, poignant, and communicative. Otherwise, rather than read, one had best take an aspirin. And in the doing of, or contact with, anything unreal there is naturally, the inevitable danger of self-defeat, the most dangerous of psychological hazards.

So far as I know, the only consistently good and actual short stories being published today are those appearing in *The New Yorker*, and even they are in danger of becoming formalized by too rigid stylistic and intellectual theories.

Free-Lancing

DONE WITH MIRRORS: Admissions Of A Free-Lance Writer. By Jack Hasty. New York: Ives-Washburn, Inc. 1943. 337 *pp.* $2.50.

MR. HASTY has given us an account of how literary livelihoods are earned on the wrong side of the tracks. No, wait a minute—wasn't it Defoe who wrote "The Apparition of Mrs. Veal" to get some books off his publisher's hands? This tells of the troubles of enterprising young men who "ghost" speeches, devise attractive radio plans for fatted sponsors, write institutional films for large motor companies and generally employ the cunning of literacy as a plumber does a monkey-wrench.

Unfortunately, Mr. Hasty's enterprises have not been as exciting or ingenious as those of Harry Reichenbach, for instance, or the late and greatly lamented Dexter Fellowes. Harry did Oriental princesses, petrified giants, hypnotic trauma induced by a motion picture Svengali, hotel-broken lions, and many other enchanting gew-gaws. Mr. Fellowes, of Ringling's, assured this reviewer that the great Alva Johnson was so much better at lying than he was that all he ever did creatively was to assume a plaintive expression and say, "Make it good, Alva," upon which his stooge of the moment did another classic for the *New York Tribune.*

Press agentry and promotion, which have furnished by far the best stories of literary chicanery for more centuries than anyone would care to admit, are treated briefly here. Radio wangling takes up about one-fourth of the book, and, as everyone knows, radio literature is still in a distressingly mucous condition.

P. S.

Elizabethan Giant

THE TRAGICAL HISTORY OF CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE. By John Bakeless. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 2 *vols.* 1942. 807 *pp.* $7.50.

Reviewed by HENRY W. WELLS

THE increasing interest in the Elizabethan dramatist Christopher Marlowe, so strikingly manifested in this two-volume study, is not difficult to explain. Recent years have favored our appreciation of some of the secondary Elizabethans more than they have advanced our appreciation of the greatest. Our times have generally lacked the equilibrium to comprehend Shakespeare's impartial vision of mankind, and as our social life has slipped farther from the Renaissance, we have increasingly departed from Edmund Spenser's Olympian idealism. Shakespeare and Spenser are poets of fulfillment, not spokesmen of growth or of decay. As our compensation, however, conflicting elements in the modern mind have been strongly attracted to the vigor of the Elizabethans, Marlowe, Jonson, and Chapman, and to the decadence of the Jacobeans, Donne, Webster, and Ford. Above all, we sympathize with Marlowe and the titanic struggles of his soul.

Life confronted him rudely as a moral problem, yielding no definite answers. He grasped the struggle but not the goal. Strongly as Machiavellianism fascinated him, it never quite satisfied his English heart. He was at once the rebel thinker who adored Faustus, and the popular dramatist who condemned him; the spokesman for and against the ruthless Tamburlaine or Guise, and the ambiguous commentator upon that self-indulgent failure in royalty, Edward II. Marlowe never rose above the storm of his own emotions and ideas. He depicted life's elemental struggles with unsurpassed frankness, painting in "Hero and Leander" a picture of sensualism alluring to Keats and still more readily grasped by the contemporary disciples of Whitman and Baudelaire.

Blackstone Studios
John Bakeless

According to the most logical of formulas, this fieriest of poets has deposited the heaviest burden of scholastic ashes. Several biographies have appeared within the last score of years, notably the rather dry compilations of data by F. S. Boas, Leslie Hotson, and by Mr. Bakeless himself in an earlier volume. The very numerous research articles are summarized in Bakeless's latest study. Unhappily, singularly little distinguished work has been written on Marlowe's thought and art. Bakeless meticulously examines the factual material; it cannot truthfully be said that he has ever begun to digest it. No doubt his important services for some time past in our armed forces have made it difficult for him to produce a more critical study.

But the book appears to the present reviewer more than encyclopedic; it seems incontestably prolix, and diffuse in a distinctly contemporary fashion. Medieval prolixity is said to have debated the number of angels capable of standing on the point of a needle; but modern prolixity declines to stick so nicely to the point. Bakeless is indefatigable in his annotations. Marlowe was employed in exciting tasks assigned him by the Elizabethan intelligence office. His biographer works as a modern intelligence officer filling in with great fullness blanks in a series of assignments. Although the data on the poet's life is sadly meagre, the biographical section is correspondingly enlarged to nearly two hundred pages, while over five hundred pages deal with the works. As tribute to Bakeless's always clear and rational exposition, it may safely be said that the circumstances of Marlowe's tragic death have never been so lucidly stated. Each of the plays is systemmatically examined according to a formula only too well known. We read in turn of the problems of authorship, date, literary sources, stage history, and influences. Finally we have a notable bibliography of over a hundred pages.

One of the chief fruits of the meth-

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od so carefully followed is to emphasize Marlowe's own role as a participant in public life and thought. Thus Marlowe is delivered from the chains of a romantic interpretation which defined his work as almost wholly subjective. With Bakeless's study, the text as arranged by Tucker Brooke, and the volumes of the plays edited under the general direction of C. H. Chase, the close student of Marlowe possesses today a truly admirable working library.

As a reference book Bakeless's work will be of great value, and that, no doubt, is what its author intends it to be. But it is in no sense a literary biography nor in itself a work of literary or social criticism. The biographical sections abound in historical irrelevancies of the type notably represented by Leslie Hotson's books on Shakespeare. The chapters on the works are similarly swollen by the citation of hundreds of passages to show that Marlowe's successors followed in his footsteps. Bakeless's method is always microscopic, never synthetic. The book is, accordingly, definitive in a double sense. It is a final summary of Marlowe scholarship to date and it may well define a watershed in literary activity. One questions whether any large number of books of this nature will henceforth be produced on the English classics as we know them. Even scholars in the future may have the right to expect that books on poets shall be interpretative and not mere summaries of periodical material. The two volumes afford an imposing monument to a living poet and to a dying method.

But Nothing That Hitler Can Fix

GENERATION OF VIPERS. By Philip Wylie. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1943. 318 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by PAUL STRINGER

THIS denunciation of the America of our time—with occasional asides on all adjacent places and ages—is discursive, to say the very least. It skips lightly from prize-fighting to modern medicine to mystery stories to politics to teaching in the public schools to biological arrangements in our society to religions to military affairs to costume to commerce to architecture to the various other arts—and to where? To Mr. Wylie's protestation that these invariably recriminatory opinions are all for the good of the American soul; for enlightenment, for reform. Seeing no good, he administers the strongest emetic and the strongest laxative among his pills simultaneously. The trouble with this treatment is that neither medicine stays down long enough to do any good. As Jeremiah discovered (I hope), uninterrupted, violent, and petulant complaint finally moves resilient minds to amusement.

Mr. Wylie's diatribes—under the circumstances we will not call them Philippics—because of unrelieved and monotonous violence, lose the effects of their few sound points in the general uproar. So many of his propositions and implications are subject to sinking that it is easy to throw the whole kaboodle overboard. No smallest point, relative or not, is passed without unfavorable comment: Washington—a woman-chaser; Grant—a drunk; Lincoln—a mug; the Pilgrims—bums. It should be called to Mr. Wylie's attention that these gentlemen do not belong to this generation of vipers; unfortunately, they are dead. The most obvious cultural evidences should show that the Pilgrims were not bums; Grant's whiskey was the fightin'est whiskey, almost, that has ever aided military ingenuity; Washington was demonstrably a great industrialist, a statesman of ability and foresight, a deeply religious man, a writer of magnificent simplicity, a social geographer, a military strategist and tactician of the grand style. What did Mr. Wylie expect him to chase—woodchucks? The proper study of mankind is man and women know more about them than anyone.

Mr. Wylie's remark that "literacy" as described in America in our time will not make his statements intelligible to a million Americans is all right with this reviewer, a good thing, too.

Janet Dexter

Philip Wylie

Master Historian

THUCYDIDES. By John F. Finley, Jr. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 1942. 344 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by C. A. ROBINSON, JR.

Thucydides of Athens wrote this history describing the course of the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians. He embarked on it at the outbreak of hostilities, because he foresaw that the conflict would be widespread in character and far more notable than any that had previously occurred. His reasons for so thinking were not only that both sides entered the war at the height of their strength but that he observed the rest of the Greek states already supporting one side or the other, either openly or in intention. This war was in fact the greatest upheaval ever to affect the Greek, as well as portions of the non-Greek, world—indeed, one had almost said, the majority of mankind.

WITH these words the great fifth century B.C. historian —perhaps the greatest historian who ever lived—opens his account of the mortal struggle between Athens and Sparta, a struggle which raged for twenty-eight years and ended with the collapse of the Athenian Empire. Thucydides wrote of no Golden Age long past, but of the harsh and shattering present, and you cannot read him now without thinking long and hard on man and his state today. A measure of Mr. Finley's brilliant success is that he makes you wish to read Thucydides himself, and Thucydides, Elmer Davis has remarked, is required reading.

Thucydides believed that the working of political forces can be calculated in advance and acted on. No Greek had a clearer mind, or a keener insight into human nature. It is impossible not to marvel at his intellectual depth and personal reserve, his relentless analysis of men and states, the fairness with which he treats of personal enemies and opposing parties.

Mr. Finley studies Thucydides from many angles and gives us a picture that is at once new and valuable, but he carries his learning so lightly that reading him is a sheer delight. He believes that Thucydides, as clearly as any tragedian, indeed as any Greek author, possessed that greatest of Greek abilities, the ability to observe the actualities of life with unflinching candor, yet at the same time, without falsifying these actualities, to reduce them to their generic and hence their lasting patterns. In short, to have performed this feat at a time when the basic political ideals of Western man were at issue, is Thucydides's monumental triumph.

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ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT MAJOR ERIC KNIGHT

TWO writers died a short time ago, within a few days of each other, Major Eric Knight and Alexander Woollcott. It would be hard to find two deaths more unlike and two men whose personalities and whose life stories were more dissimilar, though they were both writers and both men of determination and energy. Their loss has dimmed the American literary scene, already impoverished by other deaths and by the withdrawal of many men whose talents are now in the service of our country. Alexander Woollcott died of heart failure, "with his boots on" as the press said, at his familiar radio studio, though he had been ill for some time and had been warned that he must stay in bed. Eric Knight, one of the thirty-five men who were crew and passengers of a transport plane on its way to North Africa, crashed into the coastal jungle of Dutch Guiana.

Dramatic critic, journalist, magazine writer, anthologist, actor, and "Town Crier" on the radio, Alexander Woollcott's talents, aside from his acerbic critical gift, lay in some mysterious emotional affinity with the mind of the ordinary man which was not apparent to those who knew his peppery and irascible nature. His collection of newspaper articles, "While Rome Burns," swept the country, and thereafter for a few years he "sold" books over the radio as they had never been sold before or since by that medium.

As an anthologist he was no highbrow, and his occasional fondness for bathos or sentimentality, evidenced in the suave orchestration of his two large collections, produced sour and corny notes that set the more sophisticated reader's teeth on edge. He aided people, young and old, who needed help, but secretly, as if his generosity were a hidden vice. Other facets of his nature that most men prefer to hide, if they are aware they have them, he exaggerated and dramatized. He was a victim of that curious inverted exhibitionism which is not unfamiliar to this generation and was one of the distinguished few whose savage and sometimes malicious witticisms were publicized and quoted widely. But Alexander Woollcott added to this eighteenth-century gift personal phantasies, real or invented. Whether he ever owned a circular bed and slept between black silk sheets the size of a tent, you don't know, though a friend tells you so; he played croquet with fervor; he knitted in his spare moments (this is surely a canard); he sat up nights inventing horrid things to say in letters. Finally he became to the public, not the Alexander Woollcott his friends knew, but Sheridan Whiteside of "The Man Who Came to Dinner," that intellectual snob and rude boor who made wicked fun of the cultural aspirations of the comfortably rich. The future literary historian of our time will find himself mentally tortured when he reaches this extraordinary man.

But the younger man who died in the jungle in Dutch Guiana surrounded by the blazing wreckage of a great plane, might have come from another world. The sturdy and homely virtues of England's Yorkshire were bred into his blood and bones, and with them the Yorkshireman's native gift for eloquence and humor. He knew poverty all through his youth, manual labor and factory labor. He fought as a private all through the first World War in Canada's famous Princess Pat regiment and only left the army when British troops abandoned the Rhineland. As a fighting man he must have had the virtues of the bull-dog with the terrier's tenacious gaiety. Then he invented Sam Small, the flying Yorkshireman, who cannot, like his creator, die physically in our day.

Eric Knight was ardently patriotic and knew well in the ugly Munich days what it was all about. In the first year of the war, he saw England's danger and our danger and could speak eloquently and realistically about it, but his flow of conversation, if you were lucky enough to get him started after dinner, would turn slowly from war, his accent would thicken to pure Yorkshire, and he would talk absorbingly about human beings he had known. His real genius lay in his love and understanding of men and women and he had none of that American intellectual voice of over-simplification, of di-

This excerpt from an address by Eric Knight, referred to in the accompanying editorial, formed the conclusion of a lecture on "War Novels and the Years," given at The Cooper Union Forum on November 11th, 1938.

IF there is any avenue of further progress open to the writers on war and about war, it would seem to be in casting some new light upon the universality of the instinct in man to go to war. To be merely "against" war because of its horror, as most of even our best novelists are, still does not explain to the audiences of the world why war is such, as Manning called it, "a peculiarly human activity."

Merely to say that war should be abolished because it has in it many of the elements of cruelty that are inherent in man, advances us no further along the path to understanding mankind and war than would a similar suggestion that peace be abolished because we find during it hunger and poverty and starvation and depressions and loss of self-respect. Peace and war are not different phases of man's existence. They are both a part—peace is merely a period of non-war, or war is merely a period of non-peace. And during both occasions man goes on with his usual activities of quiet heroism, friendship, cruelty, and injustice. It seems that the limits for these very human prides and prejudices are merely extended in some ways and compressed in others during wartime, but then as in peace they cancel each other out and always leave us the human being.

For there is nothing in war that there is not in human nature itself. And if we say it brings death, so does peace if given enough time. And having borrowed a life, each one of us automatically owes a death and must repay it quickly or slowly.

The trouble is that creative writers, in general, have ipso facto a sensitivity that allows them to be shocked by war, but when they chronicle that reaction they are not reflecting the attitude of the average man who is less delicate in his senses.

We can merely say that it is the desire of the creative man to make all men consider war a greater evil than peace. I don't think the average man will do so, in the time of a war when such attitudes are important, until we have made of peace a thing that compares far more favorably. When the leaders of the world can make of ordinary peacetime life, a flow that is ridden of most of its present multiple inequalities and horrors, and more fitting to the dignity of being a human, then war will seem worse.

Until such a time, we shall continue to have wars, and man will go to them. And if he has been given so little of the fullness of life during peacetime, then he may not consider wartime the greater of two evils.

When we have made peace better, then only will mankind truly regard war as something worse.

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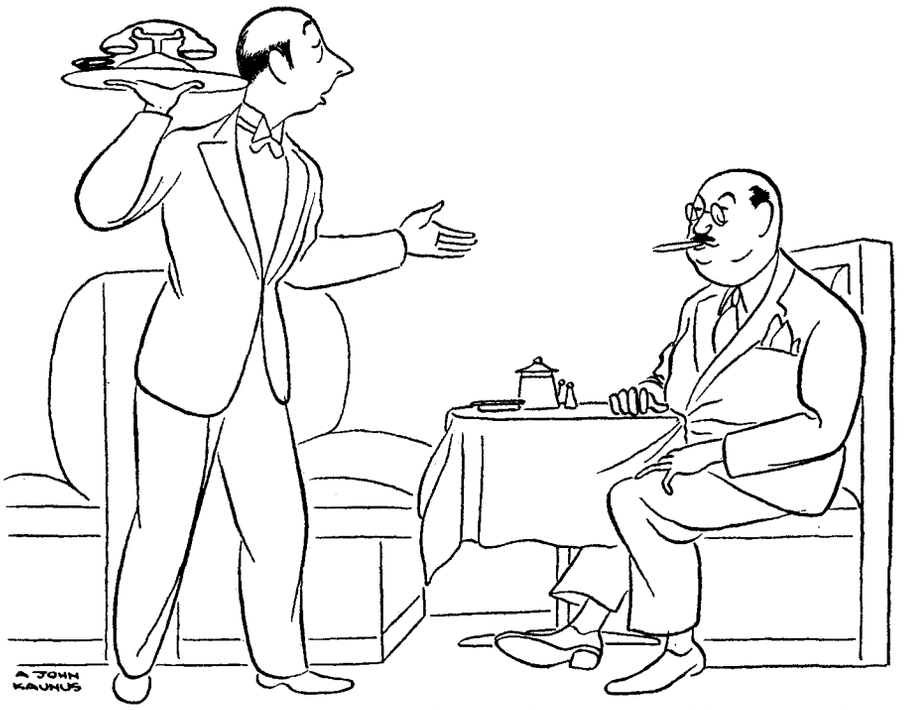
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"Hollywood and the Intellectuals"

SIR:—The liberal (or intellectual, or whatever you call him) does not quarrel with Mr. Wanger's thesis ["Hollywood and the Intellectuals," *SRL*, Dec. 5], that the motion picture is a far more powerful instrument for the dissemination of ideas than a well-written book or even a radio broadcast. The liberal's quarrel with Hollywood stems from the fact that the motion picture industry, rich, powerful, and compelling, has with shocking consistency kept the general American public oblivious of, or imperfectly acquainted with, the fundamental values for which so much blood is now being shed throughout the world. Mr. Wanger asks, "What would Goebbels give, now, to have Hollywood?" Liberals ask, "We have had Hollywood but what have we done with it? Furthermore, what do we *intend* to do with it?"

Goebbels would use Hollywood to drive home with ruthless efficiency all the hatred, ugliness, and brutality that is at the core of every Nazi gesture. But are we using Hollywood to spread throughout America and those countries not under Nazi domination some conception of the kind of world we want after this war has ended? What is being done, for example, about giving movie audiences some concrete awarness of our peace aims, about eliminating racial discrimination, about disclosing our native fascists, about spreading the principle of international brotherhood, about explaining the implications of the Four Freedoms—to mention only a few of the urgencies? On the screen the Negro is still the "Yes, ma'am" servant or the "Hallelujah singer" (ask Paul Robeson, he knows). Anti-Semitism in America has never been seriously handled by the film industry. And what does Hollywood intend to do to combat a growing pressure on the part of so many politicians for a return to the "good old pre-war normalcy"?



"And what will you have with your telephone, sir, Brooklyn, Manhattan or the Red Book?"

China has been our ally for years, but how many pictures have been filmed to show us her wonderful contributions to civilization and to emphasize the fact that a better world for her is part of a better world for us all? What have we done to establish a community of interest and purpose with the many members of the United Nations? Why are anti-Axis pictures always anti-Nazi or anti-Japanese, never anti-Franco? Mr. Wanger knows what happened to "Blockade," a picture which he and Mr. Lawson so courageously helped film. And I am certain that he is also aware of what is happening to "For Whom the Bell Tolls." As an influential figure in Hollywood, what does he plan to do about it?

I do not say such things must be. I also know that Mr. Wanger is one of our most liberal men in Hollywood. I have great confidence in the potentialities of the movie industry, and Hollywood may have seen the light—at least I hope it has and is willing to follow it. Pictures devoted to sheer entertainment are desirable and even useful if they are wholesome and well acted. But good pictures can be entertaining and artistic and still "deliver the goods." And we need many more pictures that are willing to do the delivering. Will Hollywood recognize this urgency? If it does it is justifying its existence for the average person who pays the admission price. If it doesn't, well, let the liberal alone and don't make it harder for him than it already is.

JACOB C. SOLOVAY.

Brooklyn, New York.

---

viding human characteristics into right and wrong, black and white. Humanity to him was lovable, though he knew that war and brutality were as much a part of man's composition as tenderness and an appreciation for music and literature. But war was war, and in a time of no peace, he disliked men who fought it with their mouths. We have a phrase for it here, "Put up or shut up."

Two years ago his novel, "This Above All," was a success, and for the first time he tasted the rewards of fame and prosperity. It was perhaps the first popular book that explained in emotional terms to Americans the strains and conflicts in England when she fought alone after Dunkirk. Many people thought they sensed anti-British feeling in it, but that was untrue. It was as deeply patriotic in the real sense as its author, and it has helped in that necessary task of creating a mutual understanding between the two great fighting democracies.

But Eric Knight would not permit himself to enjoy his newly found ease, or to go on writing the books that his creative mind was urged to undertake. He became a citizen of the United States, joined the Army with a major's commission and went to Washington, where he was assigned to foreign service. As he was about to leave, he wrote a letter to his publisher which deserves to be quoted again, though the *New York Times* has already printed it in an editorial:—

> When I get where I'm going, I won't be able to do any more work on the next book. It's about a guy coming home from the war . . . but I don't know. The big thing is to win this war by killing Germans, not by writing books. . . . I admire conscientious objectors in this war as long as they're conscientious about it, and I admire soldiers. The only ones I never admire are the ones who fight with their mouths.

It is also fitting, to show that almost five years ago his mind was made up, and that his death was the result of no sudden or slow mental change but was due to unalterable convictions, to republish, in an adjoining box, part of a speech he delivered in November, 1938. H. S.

BUY WAR BONDS AND STAMPS

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TRADE Winds

ALTHOUGH WE ARE STILL WONT to refer to ourselves in more or less jocular vein as "the boy publisher," a hasty glance in our secretary Jezebel's vanity case mirror the other morning revealed the undeniable fact that our locks are turning a definite, if premature, gray. One of the causes is the book publisher's perpetual worry of getting manuscripts, and corrected proofs, from authors in time to meet announced publication dates. Authors have a pleasant habit of leaving manuscripts in taxicabs on such occasions, or disappearing entirely. One afternoon, behind the scenes of "Life with Father," we were trying to charm Howard Lindsay and Buck Crouse into disgorging the proofs of their new play, "Strip for Action," with our customary lack of success. "You think *you* have troubles?" said Howard suddenly. "Just let me tell you about Charles W. Couldock!"

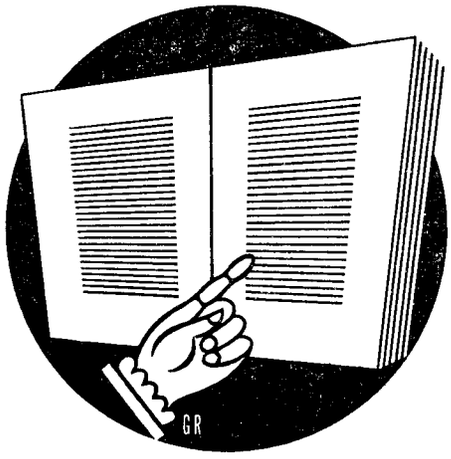
Mr. Couldock, it developed, was a distinguished star in the days when we were playing hookey from P. S. 10. He was noted both for his excellence as an actor and his personal irascibility. In one of his plays, the opening scene was between himself, another actor, and a third actor, who played Mr. Couldock's elderly father. One night the actor playing the elderly father didn't show up. The stage manager hastily put a long white beard on a super and seated him on a chair at the fireplace, telling him just to sit there and that he, the stage manager, would speak the lines from offstage through the fireplace. There was time only to tell Mr. Couldock that there was to be a different actor playing his father and to assure him that everything would be all right.

The stage manager rang up the curtain, then hurried down below the stage to reach the fireplace on the other side of the set. In his haste he ran into a beam and knocked himself unconscious. Over his head, the play progressed to the point where Couldock was asked how old his father was. Couldock answered: "I don't know exactly. I shall ask him." He went over to the bearded super and said, "Father, how old are you?" There was no answer. Couldock stared at him, adlibbed a line about father being a little deaf, kicked the super in the shins, swore at him under his breath, and repeated the question, "Father, how old are you?" Again the answer was complete silence.

Couldock marched down to the footlights and addressed the audience. "Ladies and gentlemen, my father is so goddam old he can't even talk." . . .

A PUBLISHER WE KNOW was all set to launch a novel this month with a jacket blurb that read "This book is spurious from start to finish, and anybody who pays two-fifty for it has only himself to blame. We are forced to publish it because of contractual obligations, and are ashamed to see our imprint on the title page." Conservative associates rushed his lawyer into the proceedings, and persuaded him that in that direction lay lawsuits and a general mess. He still wishes that he had had the nerve to go through with it. . . . Another publisher for whom we worked once was on the point of explaining a book of cheesy sonnets in his catalogue with a note that confessed "Don't ask me how these poems got onto our list. I woke up with a signed contract in my hands." . . . George "Jimmy" Smith, the Dallas publicist, relays the story of the old Texas drunkard who saw so many pink elephants and purple snakes that he hired a hall and put up a sign, "25c. to See the Zoo." A couple of customers resented the fact that they saw nothing but four bare walls, and swore out a complaint. The sheriff took the warrant and set out to make the arrest. The old boy hauled his jug out from under his counter, the sheriff took three snifters—and paid him $600.00 for a half interest in his show. . . .

ONE THING for which book publishers can thank their lucky stars is that they have never saddled themselves with anything like the incredible Hays office. The *New York Times*, for instance, reports that in the film "Bombardier," a Jap is referred to as a "louse." The Hays office notified the RKO studio that the word is forbidden and suggested "stinkbug" as a substitute. . . .



CHATTER IN PUBLISHERS' ROW: Duell, Sloan and Pearce received an official communication last week from the Office of Censorship in Washington. It consisted of a completely blank sheet of paper. Sam Sloan thinks that somebody in the bureau wanted to show just how far he could go, if pressed. . . . Doubleday, Doran maintains a suite in the Ritz Towers for the convenience of executives who have reason to spend occasional nights in town (most of them live in Long Island). Here, far above what was once the hub-hub and din of Park Avenue, a cocktail party was recently given for Colonel Romulo, author of the gripping "I Saw the Fall of the Philippines." Here, too, one of the guests wandered over to the bookshelves and found that they were filled with "false front" books—cardboard boxes with backstrips of old books pasted on the front. It turned out to be a notion of the hotel management, bravely trying to supply the proper atmosphere. . . . Yale University Press announces the publication of "Ancient Russia," the first of ten volumes of an ambitious project that will constitute a complete history of the Russian people. . . . Reynal and Hitchcock will publish a book by Petroleum Administrator Harold Ickes in March. It is called "The Autobiography of a Curmudgeon." Webster defines a curmudgeon as "an avaricious, grasping fellow; niggard; churl." How come? Mr. Ickes promises to do a job on Col. McCormick of the *Chicago Tribune*. We wouldn't miss it for the world. . . .

WARDER NORTON is happy to spike the rumor that the famous Spanish philosopher, José Ortega y Gasset, author of "The Revolt of the Masses," is lost somewhere in Germany. As a matter of fact, he is safe and well in Lisbon, where he is giving lectures at the University. . . . And Macmillan would not have you confuse the Mexican Dr. Luis Quintanilla who wrote "A Latin American Speaks" with the Spanish Luis Quintanilla whose humorous sketches enliven occasional books by Elliot Paul, and whose drawings of the Spanish Civil War are valuable collectors' items. . . . Lee Barker is the new director of advertising and promotion for Doubleday. He also will work with Dorothy Larrimore on publicity. Houghton Mifflin will miss him. . . . Laurence Stallings, co-author of "What Price Glory" and once book reviewer on the *New York World*, is now a lieutenant colonel in the Army Air Forces, stationed in Washington. . . . New members of the Dutton editorial staff are Fred T. Marsh, well-known book reviewer, and John Teb-

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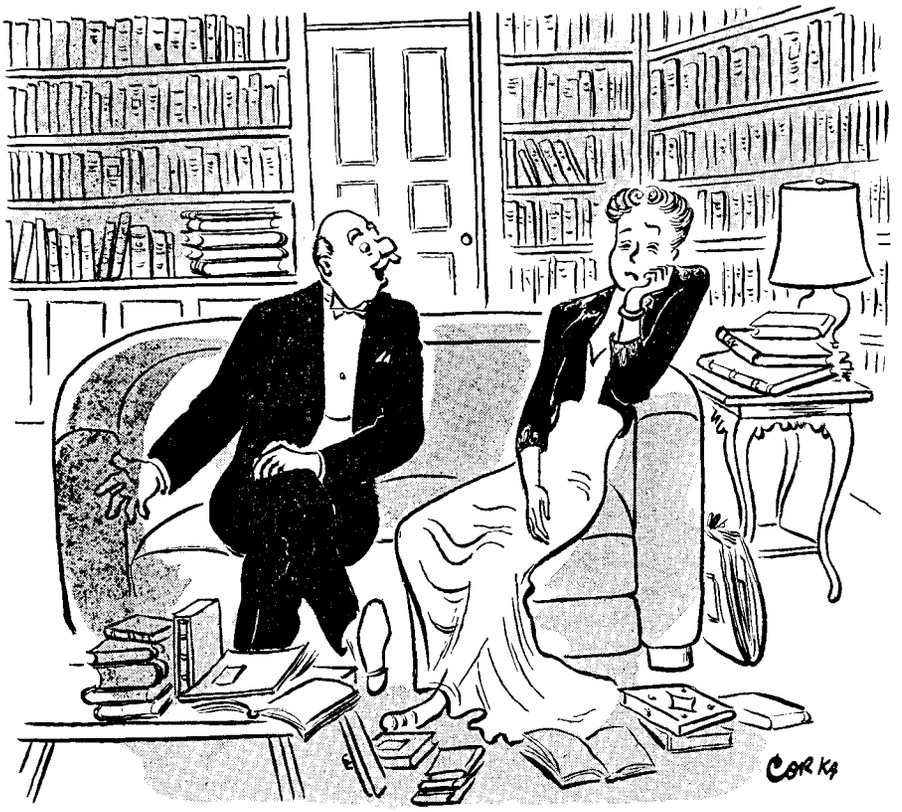

"But my life only really began when I received my Ph.D. . . ."

bell, formerly managing editor of the *American Mercury*. . . .

JOHN McCAFFERY, editor and roving lecturer for Doubleday, Doran, has the perfect name for a novel about Samson and Delilah: "Victory Through Hair Power." . . . At the last Book and Author luncheon in Philadelphia, Charles Lee, a smooth and accomplished master of ceremonies, welcomed Ben Ames Williams as one of the guest speakers. "It's a pleasure to see you in the flesh," said Mr. Lee. "That," said Mr. Williams with some asperity, "is the way I usually travel about." . . . Ilka Chase disclosed at the same meeting that she is working on a novel with the tentative title of "The Light Touch." . . . Emily Kimbrough, co-author of "Our Hearts Were Young and Gay," was another guest. After her speech, a waiter presented her with a piece of fan mail from her nine-year-old daughter. "You were pretty good, mummy," it read. "Can I go to the dentist now?" . . . The sight of Mignon Eberhart, Ilka Chase, and Emily Kimbrough on one dais may have given the assembled Philadelphians an entirely erroneous impression of what lady authors generally look like. For a moment we thought we had gotten into a rehearsal of the new Ziegfeld Follies by mistake. . . .

THE PUTNAM SPRING LIST includes a new book of war cartoons called "Jeeps and Jests," by Bruce Bairnsfather, creator of the immortal "Better 'Ole." Putnam will also publish an informal history of the New York Yankees by Frank Graham, a new novel by Sholem Asch, "The Apostle," based on the life of Saint Paul, and "The God of the Machine," an inquiry into the nature of government by Isabel Paterson. "Mrs. Paterson's book," avers the Putnam catalogue, "will be eagerly welcomed by the readers of 'Turns with a Bookworm' in the *Herald Tribune*, who, for years, have delighted in the brilliant and pointed barbs with which I.M.P. has deflated the balloons of economic experimenters." And if the *SRL* typesetter forgets to put quotes around that last sentence, we're going to do a little deflating of our own. . . .

LEONARD LYONS reports that Clifford Odets was recently in Washington, and tried for three days to locate Corporal Garson Kanin, the film director. He finally learned Kanin's phone number and called him. "Hi, Gar," he said, "I'm in Washington, at the Willard." "What room?" asked Kanin. "302," said Odets. "Wait a minute," said Kanin. Odets heard some pounding on the wall of his room. "That was I," explained Kanin. "I'm in Room 301!" . . .

BENNETT CERF.

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Pillars of the Soviet

THE RUSSIANS: The Land, the People, and Why They Fight. By Albert Rhys Williams. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1943. 239 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by I. D. W. TALMADGE

ALBERT RHYS WILLIAMS quotes his father, a clergyman, as saying that ten per cent of his congregation were pillars of the church and the rest were caterpillars. In the growing congregation of pro-Soviet publicists, Mr. Williams is no caterpillar. His knowledge of Soviet affairs is not derived from a subscription to the *New Masses* or from a two weeks' tour of Moscow and Leningrad. He has been a frequent visitor to the Land of the Soviets since the early months of the Revolution, had known Lenin intimately, and has a sound command of the Russian language. He has also travelled extensively through the width and length of the Soviet domain unaided by Intourist guides and official interpreters and seems to possess a deep affection for the Russian people.

For these reasons, some of the glib statements in his book—and, notably, his uncritical acceptance of party-line explanations—will prove disappointing to serious students of the Soviet Union. They will question his offhand assertion that the purge, which decimated the Red Army Command and which according to Mr. Williams's own admission clapped tens of thousands of Bolsheviks into concentration camps, "was one great factor in preparing for the greater ordeal of war." In his glamorized portrait of Stalin, the author states: "Outweighing everything else in enhancing his [Stalin's] prestige is the fact that for some fifteen years in the eyes of the people he has been right." Since Mr. Williams, to our knowledge, has not conducted any Gallup polls in the Soviet Union, one wonders how he established this "fact." One also wonders to what extent the embattled Russian people today, grateful for the outstretched hand of their Allies across the seas, still believe that Stalin was right in attacking the "war-mongering democracies" during the period prior to June 21, 1941. And do these Russian people in the second winter of their valiant struggle against the Nazi savage hordes still feel that Stalin was "right" in telling Von Ribbentrop that "the friendship of the peoples of Germany and of the Soviet Union, cemented by blood, will long remain firm." "That is why," he continues, "they [the Russian people] not only have kept him [Stalin] so long as head of the Party, but have now made him Premier and Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army." Mr. Williams fails to show just how the Russian people "made" Stalin their Premier and Commander-in-Chief.

On the other hand, the author is careful in his book not to make the ridiculous assertions of the more enthusiastic and less informed pro-Soviet writers who insist that because of the heroic resistance of the Russians at Stalingrad the Soviet Union is the world's greatest democracy, Stalin the foremost liberal, and that the American Communists were right in opposing President Roosevelt's armament program in 1940. Mr. Williams points out justly that "for a correct appraisal one should list both Russia's successes and failures, and strike a balance between the good and the bad." But he asseverates in the very next paragraph that "not by its negative aspects, however, can one explain or evaluate the Soviet Union . . ." Then he proceeds to list its positive achievements. These, he believes, are: collectivization, disappearance of racial and national antagonism, industrialization, increase of educational facilities, emancipation of women, public health, abolition of educational facilities, social gains, elimination of economic crises, system of planning, and "the feeling the Soviet people have of being engaged in a great and significant adventure." What he tells is, broadly speaking, true but by no means the whole truth. These are "theoretical" rather than "practical" truths. Thus speaking of a thirty-seven per cent wage increase, he omits to state the disproportionate rise in the price of consumer's goods as shown in Manya Gordon's "Workers Before and After Lenin." In the same over-optimistic vein are Mr. Williams's chapters on the schools, press, radio, finance, agriculture, and the Soviet government structure.

In discussing religion Mr. Williams says that at the outbreak of the war the chief organ of the League of Militant Atheists ceased publication "with one last blast at the Nazis for *their* persecution of religion." Despite the recent rapprochement between Soviet officialdom and the clergy, Mr. Williams feels that "one should not look forward in the immediate future to seeing Stalin pass the collection plate in church."

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

POETS ON OTHER POETS

Miss Alice G. Crowell, of Los Angeles, contributes this week's quiz, which consists of comments by famous poets about others of their kind. Allowing 5 points for each blank correctly filled, and another 5 if you name the poet who wrote the words, a score of 50 is par, 60 is very good, and 70 or better is excellent. Answers on page 21.

1. .....'s magic could not copied be;
   Within that circle none durst walk but he.
2. Seven cities warred ..... being dead,
   Who living had no roofe to shrowd his head.
3. ....., well of English undefyled,
   On Fames eternall beadroll worthie to be fyled.
4. O mighty-mouth'd inventor of harmonies,
   O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
   God-gifted organ-voice of England,
   ....., a name to resound for ages.
5. When .....'s eyes were shut in death,
   We bow'd our head and held our breath.
   He taught us little: but our soul
   Had *felt* him like the thunder's roll.
6. Oh, ... ! ..... ! cease thy varied song!
   A bard may sing too often and too long.
7. ....., lyric lord of England's lordliest singers, here first heard
   Ring from lips of poets crowned and dead the Promethean word
   Whence his soul took fire, and power to outsoar the sun-ward soaring bird.
8. ..... ! Since Chaucer was alive and hale,
   No man hath walked along our roads with step
   So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue
   So varied in discourse.
9. There comes ..... first, whose rich words, every one,
   Are like gold nails in temples to hang trophies on.
10. ..... wrote in the German tongue:
    He must have learned it very young. . . .
    He did quite nicely for the Dutch,
    But here he doesn't count for much.

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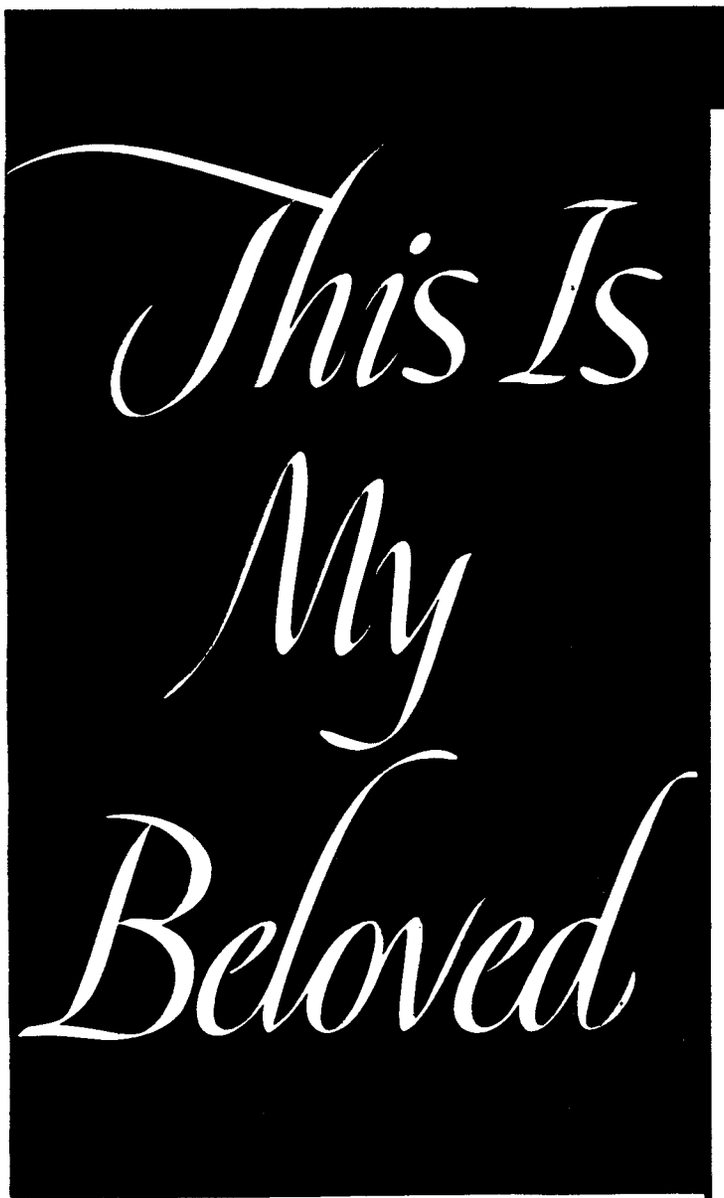

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JOHN HALL WHEELOCK:
"This group of poems impressed me more than anything I have read for a long time. The imagery and the phrasing are so fresh and alive as to stamp the work, in my opinion, as that of an original talent, while the sincerity and force and great beauty of this achievement lift it above the limitations which purely erotic poetry ordinarily reveals."

VAN WYCK BROOKS:
"Walter Benton's verse seems to me full of real poetic feeling. He has sometimes splendid images—'like God striking a match across the cathedral ceiling'—and other expressions of unusual beauty; and his emotional quality is direct and intense."

KENNETH FEARING:
"Walter Benton's is poetry of a very high order dealing with the most difficult theme imaginable—love, not the way Dorothy Dix would like to have it in a world run by Emily Post, but as it too frequently is, in a world that is what it is."

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS:
"I think Walter Benton has adopted the one convincing method to speak of love, to praise love, to make love a vivid and convincing force in the mind of a reader by this objective speaking of its effects. The poems are youthful, clean as a flame."

HORACE GREGORY:
"Walter Benton's verse contains the merits of ease, originality, and freshness. One cannot doubt that he is a true poet."

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Post-Bellum Pacific Structure

BASIS FOR PEACE IN THE FAR EAST. By Nathaniel Peffer. New York: Harper & Bros. 1942. 277 pp., with Index. $2.50.

Reviewed by MARK J. GAYN

THREE blueprints for victory over Japan have been published in recent weeks. The first was by a newspaperman (Hugh Byas); the next by an ambassador (Joseph Grew), the latest is by Professor Nathaniel Peffer, one of America's most thoughtful students of Asiatic affairs. Despite their dissimilar backgrounds and vocations, the three men reach largely the same conclusions. Japan, they agree, is a tough foe; defeat on the field of battle will not end her imperial ambitions; to prevent the recurrence of another war, Japan must be crushed. The disagreement, mainly, is on the degree of devastation to be visited upon Japan, and strangely enough it is the professor whose proposal is the most draconic. This is the way Professor Peffer puts it:

> Japan must be not only defeated, but crushed—maimed and left helpless, beyond possibility of recovery for a long period. It must be driven from the Asiatic continent and from the islands off the continent and in the Pacific. It must be returned to the geographical position it occupied when it emerged from seclusion.

Once this is done and the desired "pedagogic effect" achieved, Japan—according to Professor Peffer's blueprint—must be granted access to raw materials and markets on equal terms with other powers. Professor Peffer admits that this would mean forfeiture of economic priority once enjoyed by the Western nations in the Pacific. But he believes this is inevitable anyway. With Japan first punished and then given an opportunity to recover, and with China strong, peace in the Pacific would be relatively secure for generations to come.

Mr. Peffer's blueprint does not confine itself to Japan. It suggests large-scale assistance to China and supervised independence for Korea and the colonial lands of the southwest Pacific. With none of these points can there be any basic disagreement. The developments he charts are either necessary or historically inevitable. It is with his proposals on Japan that I find it more difficult to agree. Some of his plan is desirable, but unrealistic. Some is built on premises whose weight I doubt. There are gaps in the plan which should have been filled. Many points, finally, provoke questions which must be answered before the peace terms can be defined.

For one thing, I strongly doubt that Japan's mentality or ambitions can be altered by a blood bath. What I know of the Japanese would lead me to believe that deliberate, "pedagogic" devastation would produce bitterness and a yearning for revenge. The patriotic societies would sprout underground, prophets of retribution would gain sway, and the timid rulers backed by the victorious democracies would be no more than quislings in the eyes of their co-nationals.

The devastation will have to have a limit—the danger point beyond which lies national extinction. Where would Mr. Peffer set this danger point? Would he confine destruction to the war industries, or would he raze the textile plants, the flour mills, the toy makers' shops? And if Japan's entire productive means are rubbed out, would that not mean that Japan would re-enter the world markets with brand new machinery? Can it be reasonably expected that the Allies would (as Mr. Peffer suggests) help Japan to build new plants which would inevitably rob the Allies of their foreign trade?

Japan's post-war government is of direct concern to Tom, Dick, and Harry in every other land. If it's jingoist at heart, it will secretly plan revenge. If it's weak, it won't be able to hold the extremists in check. Who would Mr. Peffer wish to shoulder the burden of governing Japan? Would he not second President Wallace's wise proposal to control Japan's education? Would he try, and penalize, the militarists who plunged Japan into this war—Tojo, Nishio, Itagaki, Yamamoto, Suetsugu? What would he do about the powerful financial interests which backed the army in aggression, and even (as in China) took an active part in it? Would he allow them to take charge of the rehabilitation of Japan? Would he permit them to regain control of the press and national politics?

There is nothing to prevent Japanese scissor plants from secretly manufacturing bayonets, the automobile factories from building tanks. Would Mr. Peffer favor the maintenance of an alien police force in Japan for the next two or three generations to see that Japan does not rearm? Would he favor a close watch on Japan's ports and shoreline to prevent the erection of naval facilities?

Mr. Peffer justly notes that the present social structure and public mentality date back to the feudal days. To ensure peace it is necessary to wreck the structure and modify the thinking. But if Japan's present Army-dominated government machinery is destroyed, what will replace it? Would the governments concerned in any manner control the evolution of the new administration? Meddling with the mind of the Japanese man-in-the-street means meddling with the schools he attends, publications he reads, movies he sees. Would Mr. Peffer favor alien control of these, and how would he exercise such control?

These are just some of the questions brought forth by the book. The fact that such questions arise does not in any manner detract from the worth of Mr. Peffer's work. On the contrary, the value of this admirable little volume rests largely upon the questions it evokes. Mr. Peffer has produced a remarkably well-considered starting point for a discussion of the post-bellum Pacific structure. To those who will some day draft the peace terms for Japan, or even to the general reader concerned over the Pacific problems, this book is mandatory reading.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 462)

LORD CHESTERFIELD:
IN "THE WORLD"
(THURSDAY, NOV. 14, 1754)

Should the ingenious author of the words in Italian Opera by mistake put any meaning into them, he would check and cramp the genius of the composer of the music, who might think himself obliged to adapt his sounds to the sense.

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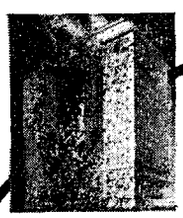

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Film Phenomena

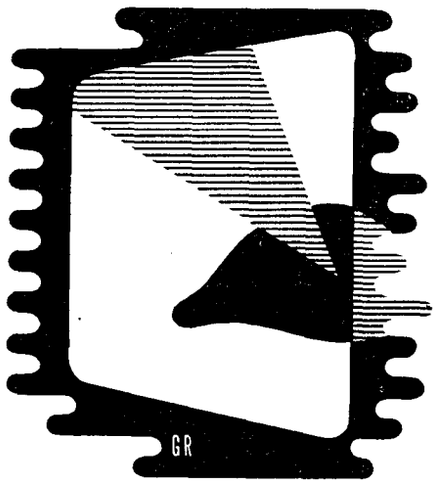
HOLLYWOOD is as busy as a league of nations. In the Disney Studio, the one and only Walt is carrying on with the Army, the Navy, the Department of Agriculture, the Office of Coördinator of Inter-American Affairs, the Canadian Government, etc. After all the abuse the industry has been enjoying these many years, it is nice to see the gold braid and to receive long-distance calls from Washington asking to please dream up something. And what effective dreams—the kind Lewis Mumford must have been referring to when he said: "Only the dreamers are practical men."

In the commissary at Disney's, you see sitting quietly at one table an American Naval Officer who has just returned from experiences on two carriers—now lost. But his squadron shot down seventy Nips before the sinkings. He is an expert on naval aviation tactics and gunnery. He is working with Disney to rush through Priority Double Triple AAA films that will show our Navy fliers how to get better results. At another table is a British officer, sent here by the English Government to assist in the preparation of what should be a Disney "chef d'oeuvre"—"The Gremlins." Could there be a better case to prove the difference between the Democracies and the Axis than to know that our side, in the midst of battle, can spare an officer to help glorify the Gremlins and that the British want to protect their fantasy by military assistance?

The "Story of Corn" by Disney is another colossal achievement prepared by the experts of the Department of Agriculture. "Saludos Amigos," the result of the Disney-Rockefeller expedition to Latin America last year, is now a wonder picture already in release among our sister Republics. Watch for it. It is really something!

Major Seversky is also in evidence on the Disney lot. He is assisting in the filming of "Victory Through Air Power" which Disney is bringing to the screen. Little sensations like "Education for Death" and "The Fuehrer's Face" are ready for release as well. All of this and a great deal more is coming from the modernistic pastel-colored fairyland plant where thousands are creating and delivering in the interest of the new education of the free world. At this writing Disney and his staff are visiting Mexico. Guess what's coming next!

ONE OF THE MOST brilliant men in the film world is John Grierson, a Scotsman who was the leading spirit



in the pre-war documentary film movement in England. He now does very well by the title of Film Commissioner for the Canadian National Film Board. In this capacity he directs the most vigorous war-reporting film-making organization of any of the Allied Governments. In a letter just received, he writes:

> I hope you have been able to see our more recent items in the "World in Action" series. "Mask of Nippon" is a fairly literate effort with an astounding piece of Japanese atrocity at the beginning. Since you are interested in propaganda, you may be pleased to note how that little piece at the beginning motivates the whole and turns what might have been so easily a very flattering account of the Japs into its opposite. We are busy on a bigger thing at the moment, on "Psychopolitik." We are calling it "War for Men's Minds," using Willkie's phrase at Chunking. It's the other half of the Geopolitical story, and runs on the theme that you may conquer a lot of space and still not be able to capture a single loyalty.

JAMES HILTON, whose "Random Harvest" is one of the important films of the season, contributes a column weekly to the *Los Angeles Times* on the United Nations. He is joining the United States Signal Corps and will become a member of the distinguished group associated with Lieutenant Colonel Frank Capra, whose unit under General Osborn has produced a magnificent film for the soldier morale program titled "Prelude to War."

Congresswoman Clare Luce has arrived to help Twentieth Century Fox do a Chinese film. The Congresswoman is donating her entire stipend to China Relief (Mr. Byrnes please note).

WALTER WANGER.

DON'T MISS

"Saludos Amigos" (Disney)
"In Which We Serve" (Noel Coward)
"Random Harvest" (MGM of "Miniver" fame)

Not recommended if you've just been stitched!

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➡ "He's madder than Bemelmans, Thurber and Frank Sullivan all rolled into one." —*San Francisco Chronicle*

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THE DREAM DEPARTMENT
by S. J. Perelman

A RANDOM HOUSE BOOK

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IT'S SMART TO BE GEOPOLITICAL

(*Continued from page 5*)

with its totally different social, economic, and cultural conditions. Moreover, ideologies, as we noted, pass across frontiers with greatest of ease.

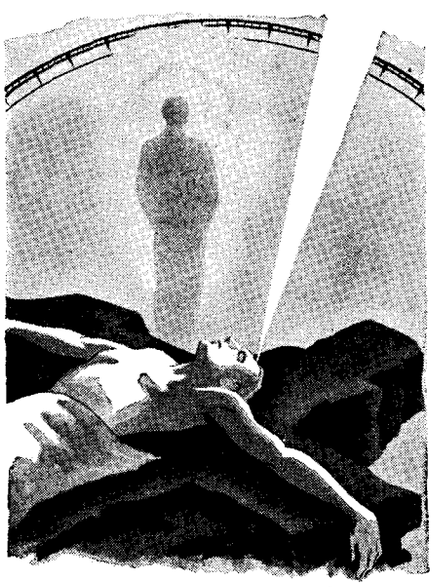
DORPALEN'S "The World of General Haushofer" contains a compilation of selected readings from the better-known German geopoliticians; from Rudolf Kjellen, the Swedish founder of Geopolitics; from Friedrich Ratzel, the father of modern political geography, and Sir Halford F. Mackinder, whose ideas on the strategical configuration of the globe suffered a strange metamorphosis when adapted by Haushofer to German "realities." Dorpalen supplies a commentary which covers the ground surveyed by Dr. Whittlesey and associates. Some of the selections, particularly those from writings on population policy, economic policy, and "space strategy," reveal more of what is valid and what is bumptious nonsense in Geopolitik than could be brought to light by another ream of books about Haushofer's strange world.

Dorpalen's book is a work of patient and scholarly research. The translations are faithful enough—but some of the passages quoted, especially those from Haushofer, are as confused and verbose as is the original. Colonel Beukema's introduction contains a pungent critique of Geopolitics on a few pages. The terse sentences of the American colonel contrasted with the rambling periods of the German General neatly illustrate the profound difference in American and German thinking habits and why each nation—as Dr. Weigert aptly puts it—has the geopolitics it deserves.

Mr. Dorpalen, unlike Dr. Whittlesey and associates, does not suggest that German Geopolitik should be taken—in a literal sense as embodying a plan of German world conquest. He sees in Geopolitik a method, a guide rather than a set of schemes for German power politics. Haushofer, for example, is far from sanguine as regards Germany's chances to rule the world. A good many of his comments on the Soviet Union and the United States can be interpreted as a pessimistic estimate of the competitive position, in the power political line-up, not only of Germany but of all of Europe. Not that Haushofer would not like to devour as much of the riches of this earth as the gluttonous Nazis! However, his appetite is tempered by a better understanding of Germany's capacity to grasp and to keep.

Those who will seek, in the source material presented by Dr. Whittlesey

A SPLIT SECOND IN ETERNITY



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The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE CASE OF THE SMOKING CHIMNEY *Erle Stanley Gardner* (Morrow: 2.)	Cal. real-estate man dies mysteriously in lonely shack. "Gramps" Wiggins harasses officials but turns in right solution.	Not only capital murder mystery but good character study of indomitable oldster with keen eye for tiny clues and inexhaustible humor.	Very good
THE SHUDDERS *Anthony Abbot* (Farrar & Rinehart: $2.)	Death of convicted Phila. killer in chair followed by violent exits of his executives. Thatcher Colt elucidates.	"Traumatic shock" murderer with diabolical scientific knowledge finally meets match in fantastic and suspensive tale.	Ingenious
MURDER DOWN UNDER *A. W. Upfield* (Crime Club: $2.)	Australian writer makes American debut with colorful tale of vanishment, violence, and expert detecting by Inspector A. Bonaparte.	Half-caste aboriginal star of Queensland detecting force turns in well-thought-out job of sleuthing, filled with local color.	Refreshing
DON'T CATCH ME *Richard Powell* (Simon & Schuster: $2.)	Slick scheme to steal priceless Phila. furniture collection spoiled by young antique merchant and wife.	Double-barrelled plot involving Nazi conspirators, vast amount of scurrying around, clever talk and engaging characters—who over-do things slightly.	Recommended
ALIAS THE DEAD *George Harmon Coxe* (Knopf: $2.)	Jobless Cal. reportorial aspirant takes on perilous masquerade job, gets into murderous tangle and extricates self satisfactorily.	Suave and ruthless bunch of thugs, vividly portrayed, keep book humming with action. Hero's deductions are keen and plot well tangled.	First class
THE CASE OF THE WEIRD SISTERS *Charlotte Armstrong* (Coward-McCann: $2.)	Tycoon brings secret'ry-fiancee to Mich. iron-mining town home of step-sisters, where murder occurs and MacDougal Duff enters.	Deaf, blind, and maimed harridans supply bizarre atmosphere of Gothic yarn. Duff's sleuthing psychologically sound, with surprise twist at finish.	Out-of-the-ordinary

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and Mr. Dorpalen, a simple outline of German world strategy, will be disappointed. It is precisely the boast of the Geopolitikers that "the geopolitical method of observation" dispenses with fixed schemes and does away with "static" notions in world politics. The Geopolitikers are singularly reticent in divulging their "plans." They are downright secretive when it comes to revealing rules by which any and all nations can play their own particular games of world politics. Haushofer reserves the most biting epithets for his own countrymen, their propensity for intricate "plans" and their lack of intellectual elasticity. He extols the Anglo-Saxon's genius for improvisation, and points to the Mahans, Leas, Mackinders, the Lattimores, Bowmans, and Curzons as the true global minds whom Germans should seek to emulate. Even the Soviets, with their World Political Institute—Haushofer says—are geopolitically ahead of the Germans. The lesson he is most anxious to impart is this: in world politics everything is change and a drawer full of plans is no adequate substitute for the power of decision.

There would be little reason to inflict upon the American public the theorizings of an ill-tempered German general did they not contain a key to the enemy's thinking *and* to a political philosophy of international appeal. In this philosophy, vivified strategic geography is the determining factor in world politics. Yet this new geographical determinism singularly fails to explain the most baffling phenomenon in world politics, namely the growth of this negligible geographic quantity, Nazi Germany, into a world menace.

Geographical environment explains much about the political aspirations of a nation, but it hardly is the mainspring of its foreign policy. Geography does not make history, it only determines where history is made; even seemingly immutable geographic and strategic factors are susceptible to modification by man. The man-made canals of Suez and Panama profoundly affected the political geography of the globe and altered the political outlook of several nations. Thus we see the influence of geography on history curbed by human will and by the state of the arts, *i.e.,* industrial equipment, means of transportation, instruments of warfare, etc. In this war, the onslaught of political ideologies and psychological warfare reduced many an impregnable strategic and geographic position to a mere name on the map. World politics has long ceased to be a matter of mere geographic readjustments. It is here that we recognize the fallacy of German Geopolitik, it is here that we must draw the line between geopolitics—as applied science —and a new kind of geographic determinism. The market is glutted with schemes for the external organization of world society. Geopolitics—as *the* sure guide to the future world order—is merely the name for another global parlor game.

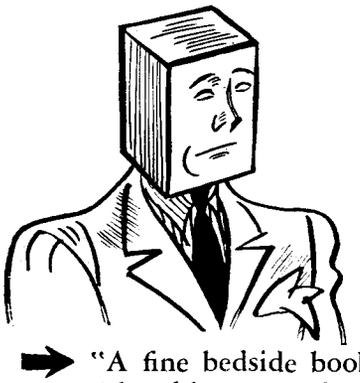
Not the least of the significance of Dr. Whittlesey's book lies in its discriminating approach to the question: What can we learn from German Geopolitik? Dr. Whittlesey writes:

> In their assiduous study of the earth and its resources, the Germans have learned much about natural conditions. This they have made the basis of an altered political and economic structure of the earth which they believe technological advances of recent decades make possible. . . . For peoples of pacific traditions the implications of the advanced state of German knowledge about the earth are clear. To set up and keep in running order a world imbued with a mutual will to peaceful neighborliness will take an understanding of the earth-base of human society at least equal to that possessed by the better informed Germans. . . . This knowledge can be obtained and disseminated only by a long-term program of learning about the earth in which everybody will participate.

This is sound advice. For geography —if it also does not determine man's fate—is the most constant factor in international relations. States are no phantoms floating through the void; they are earth-bound. As long as the world is not united under one government, states will pursue territorial interests and sometimes these interests will clash. Their foreign policy will then be influenced by calculations similar to those which determine the selection of a store-front along a busy thoroughfare. Considerations of this order need not lead a nation to aggression any more than the selection of a strategic store-front need lead the store-owner into a fist-fight with his competitors. Within this frame of reference, power and the geographic conditions of power require a sober analysis. It would be a pity were all attempts at such sober analysis to be greeted with cat calls of "imperialism" and "power politics."

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

1. Shakespeare, in Dryden: "The Tempest."
2. Homer, in Thomas Heywood: "Hierarchie of the Blessed Angells."
3. Dan Chaucer, in Spenser: "The Faerie Queene."
4. Milton, in Scott: "Milton."
5. Byron, in Arnold: "Memorial Verses."
6. Southey, in Byron: "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers."
7. Shelley, in Swinburne: "Eton, An Ode."
8. Browning, in Landor: "To Robert Browning."
9. Emerson, in Lowell: "A Fable for Critics."
10. Goethe, in H. C. Bunner: "Shake, Mulleary, and Goethe."



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THE DREAM DEPARTMENT
by S. J. Perelman

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The Phoenix Nest

IT was about the coldest Saturday morning, it seemed to us, of the winter, and we were up rather early for us. We had to be at the Hotel Edison at 10:30, and we eventually found the room in which was to be held the panel discussion of the College English Association, to which we had been kindly invited by Burges Johnson of Union College, Secretary Pro Tem. Howard Lowry of Princeton, the President, had to leave early; but we saw him before the meeting began. This is in no sense to be a report upon that meeting, or upon the luncheon in the Hotel that followed, after which Christopher Morley and John Erskine spoke to the assembled college teachers. We shall merely emit a few random thoughts.

Owing to circumstances, the panel turned into a symposium, where everybody at the table at the end of the room was given about ten minutes to speak. We found Ourself there, though we had not understood that we were to be of the group. We were very scared at first; kept our mouth shut; and discovered on our right Walter Prichard Eaton; the chairman of the meeting being upon our left. Eaton is eight years our senior, but he certainly doesn't look it! He started the ball rolling with some nice acid criticism of certain types of teaching. But he said the ballad should be taught by somebody able to sing. Now we have tried to teach the ballad; and we can't sing a note. We always flat. When it came our time to speak, therefore, we said we knew a big man downtown, anyway, who could sing ballads; and intimated that, perhaps, it might be a good thing for all English teachers to import him when they set about to teach same!

Should we bandy about a lady's name? No. The next speaker was a lady novelist—no, let's say a *woman novelist;* because she is a straightforward sort of person, without frills, though with great charm and merriment. She astounded us, however, by pitching into contemporary literature with an energy that practically wiped it off the map. (Burges Johnson later pointed out that she had added to the sum total of the thing she attacked by no less than seven volumes.) One sideswipe got Ernest Hemingway right on the kisser. She said that in fifty years he would be known only as a footnote to the literature of sleeping-bags!

She said she had been scared to speak before all those teachers. But that was nothing to our own state of mind, as we quavered to our feet! There is a professorial accent that always takes us back to the back row in the high tier of benches in some lecture-room, where we played tick-tack-toe with a seat-mate behind some drab volume on Economics or Physical Geography. (The alphabet started from the top benches.) It chills the spine with memory of the characteristic professorial pounce; and we always feel disastrously unprepared. Incidentally the fair-sex-(fair?)-novelist had knocked a couple of teeth out of Beaumont & Fletcher, by calling them "dopes," so we started by wondering aloud which might have been the bigger dope, Beaumont or Fletcher?

This got a faint smile. So we then said something badly-expressed about Literature being Life; about Poetry in Wartime; about Is Contemporary Literature Contemptible? No; about Fielding being known as a footnote to tavern assignations and Chaucer as one to the amorous propensities of Millers and Wives of Bath; a few more cracks like that—pretty feeble—and sat down.

For some reason old Samuel Richardson kept bobbing up and down in the back of our mind, and we kept saying to ourself, "Was dear old Samuel Richardson the repository of great wisdom and morality," such as the Fair Sex seems to imply resided only in the authors of eld, even though she hates so many of them? The dear old boy had his wig on askew, and was far gone in potations. Since they have introduced repeal up in Heaven, it has been very bad for him. These great big gals of ancient Greece, that used to live up in the clouds with Jove, take him off on benders. And you remember he always *was* fond of the ladies! Look at "Pamela"! We didn't feel that Mr. Hemingway ought to be held responsible for all the world-old unclean fun of lovemaking. Think of Tobias Smollett! But then, later, the woman novelist remarked that the lovemaking in Hemingway's books was practically the only good thing in them. We countered that by saying that he had evolved a new style. That was after a very literate Professor of English had spoken on the Critical Analytical method of teaching from the Text (it seems to be a good one, except that it seems to leave out so much!), and we had a dreary idea that we were establishing Hemingway as a stylist. He is; but what of it; he is a great deal more than that.

How distance lends both enchantment and disenchantment! Just because the writing of contemporaries is right there in front of you, and they are alive and you are, in the same world, it is impossible for certain people to believe that they can possibly be any good. But if they are good and dead, and you are (physically, we mean), then generations yet unborn will hail them masters—and, maybe, you too. The world is always going to the dogs, as a dignified gentleman reminded us, rising from the front row. Suddenly he thundered out against Shelley. This startled us considerably. It also pained us, as Shelley is one of our favorites. But the moral indignation of Cotton Mather burned no more fiercely than that of this teacher of English at technical schools. It also burned earnestly against Ernest. We were asked if we wished to reread "For Whom the Bell Tolls"? Yes; twice. "Had we read it once?" Yes. Once. We wondered, the while, what was being got at? "For Whom the Bell Tolls" seemed tc have shouldered its way into the room, and to be taking up most of the space!

Something else was said that made us contentious; though, in a way, we agreed with it. It was said that it was hard to tell the youth of today how lovely were the years between 1908 and 1918, before America got into the last World War; (and what is quite forgotten, by the way, is that she was the seventeenth nation, not the fourth, fifth, or sixth even, to enter it!) Lately, because we had never read it, and yet had always heard that it was a novel of some stature, we have been reading "Susan Lennox: Her Fall and Rise," by the late David Graham Phillips, a crackerjack reporter and "muckraker" in his day. It stands up very well. Phillips certainly was not, like Hemingway, a stylist; but he pulled no punches and he wrote clearly. Having been a sheltered youth, he may have reacted to the real world of the poor in a rather more dramatic fashion than it is the custom of the poor (who expect nothing and one seldom disapproved) to react themselves; but the gentlemen of the symposium were regarding a decade through, as it seemed to us, rather rosy "specs."

The Saturday sirens (we mean the whistles!) broke up the symposium and we all went to lunch. Mr. Morley (who electrically appeared, an Edison apparition in a beard) buying the Fair Sex, and the author of "The Praying Mantis," and Ourself a preprandial cocktail, afterward electrically spoke with great radio-activity; and John Erskine made one of the best educational speeches we have ever heard. We staggered home no earlier than five P.M.; and we're still thinking things over! Let's have an Educational Number, on the teaching of "English"! WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

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The Crostics Club

ONCE again I discover that the *New Words* section of Webster contains what I have sought without avail in the regular section. Ted Robinson of *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* tells me that *discombobulate* is thus classified, though why, passes my understanding. He adds:

"All this was the subject of a controversy in my column for several days after the appearance of the news story. I shan't bother you with details; but the facts emerged that (1) the word is at least eighty years old; (2) that it was quite familiar to a majority of people; (3) that the exceptions were among the newer generation. It is Civil War slang, and already a little quaint—like *rambunctious, catawampous,* and *tarnation.*" Will someone send us a sample of T. R.'s "column," please?

Atcheson L. Hench, University of Virginia, confirms Steven Byington's find of *discombobulate* in "The Dictionary of American English." "Incidentally," he concludes, "your and Miss Long's use of the word (and mine, too), not to mention Mr. Roosevelt's, is proof that the DAE is wrong in calling the word obsolete." Which raises anew the question: What releases a word from its label of slang or colloquial and promotes it to the dignity of authority?

Quick-witted rhymsters—or should I say poets?—among us have been happily prolific of late. I include at this time this effusion from Frances Ames Randall, Duxbury, Mass., dedicated to Dr. Lewellys Barker, to whose protest over difficult words in No. 452 I promised to watch my steps:

VIOTTI—1753-1824

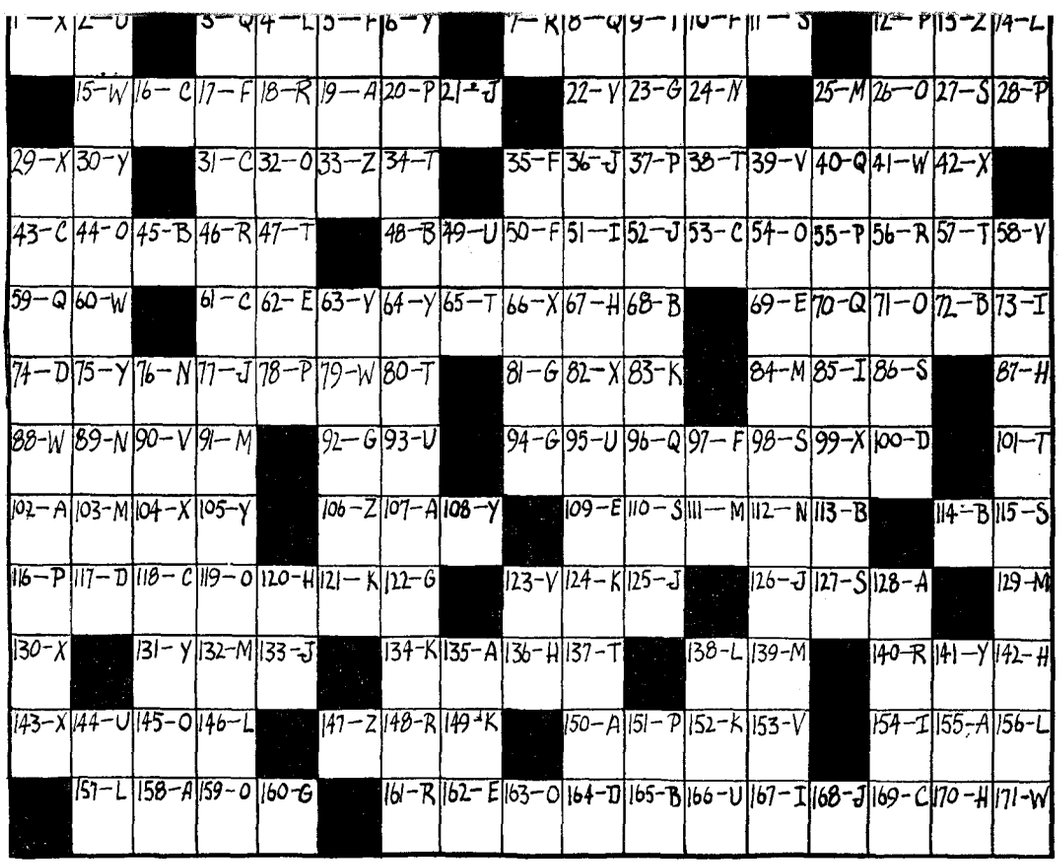
Fiddle *noachian* he did own,
Superlative his singing tone—
He suffered from *acyrology*—
His faith was in astrology.

In *orchestics* he won great fame,
Found favor with a dimpled dame,
His dish was *poltophagic* food
Because his teeth were far from good;
Villatic life, enjoyed with nieces,
Inspired him to make a *rhesis.*

Envoi—
Your courage, Dr. Barker, screw
To sticking point all bran and new,
Drink to E. K.—let her hit hard
And deal out new words by the yard.

Would Miss Randall object to including Philip R. Clarke, President of the City National Bank and Trust Co. of Chicago, in her apostrophe? For Mr. Clarke, in righteous indignation over certain selections in Series No. 13 writes seriously: "Before you serve up the Lord's Prayer in Arabic or the National Anthem in Sanskrit, I suggest you go back to the technique that characterized your earlier days" . . . Dear me! How can one in college return to the vocabulary of kindergarten days?

E. S. K.



Double-Crostics: No. 463

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-six words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words, therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1940 edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 18 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. American author of answer to *L.* (1814-52).

B. The narrator of "Moby Dick."

C. Character in "The Merchant of Venice."

D. Something which draws or attracts.

E. State admitted in 1846.

F. Natives of a chain of Islands near Alaska.

G. East Indian confection similar in effects to hashish and opium.

H. Applied to a squint or rolling eye.

I. Novel by Julian Hawthorne.

J. Poem by Browning in 8 scenic divisions (with *The*).

K. Historic Colorado coal-miners' strike—1913-5.

L. Popular *widow* of *Papers* by author in *A.*

M. Interrogation for rhetorical effect.

N. Novel by Mrs. Gaskell (1853).

O. Periodical by DeFoe (1704-13).

P. Act of considering or estimating.

Q. State of abstracted musing.

R. Poem by Whittier occasioned by Webster's support of the Missouri Compromise.

S. To defeat by a narrow margin (2 wds.)

T. Hilly sheep-raising tract in Gloucestershire, Eng.

U. Opposed to compact.

V. A structural-iron worker who works high up in the air (slang).

W. Scared or drove away (fowls).

X. Poetical name for Ireland.

Y. Thorough (ill-meaning as a rule; comp.)

Z. A sign; divine portent (Arabia).

WORDS

150 102 135 128 19 158 155 107

45 72 113 48 114 68 165

61 43 31 16 118 169 53

100 74 164 117

62 162 109 69

35 17 97 5 50 10

160 81 94 23 92 122

67 87 120 142 170 136

154 51 167 73 85

168 36 21 77 125 126 133 52

124 149 83 152 121 134

138 14 146 4 156 157

139 111 132 84 103 25 129 91

89 24 112 76

119 26 145 54 159 44 71 32 163

55 28 116 37 12 151 20 78

70 59 96 40 8 3

18 7 56 140 161 148 46

98 27 11 86 110 127 115

38 57 101 80 65 9 137 34 47

166 2 93 95 144 49

58 90 22 153 123 39 63

60 15 88 41 79 171

1 82 42 66 104 130 99 143 29

6 64 105 75 141 131 108 30

106 147 33 13

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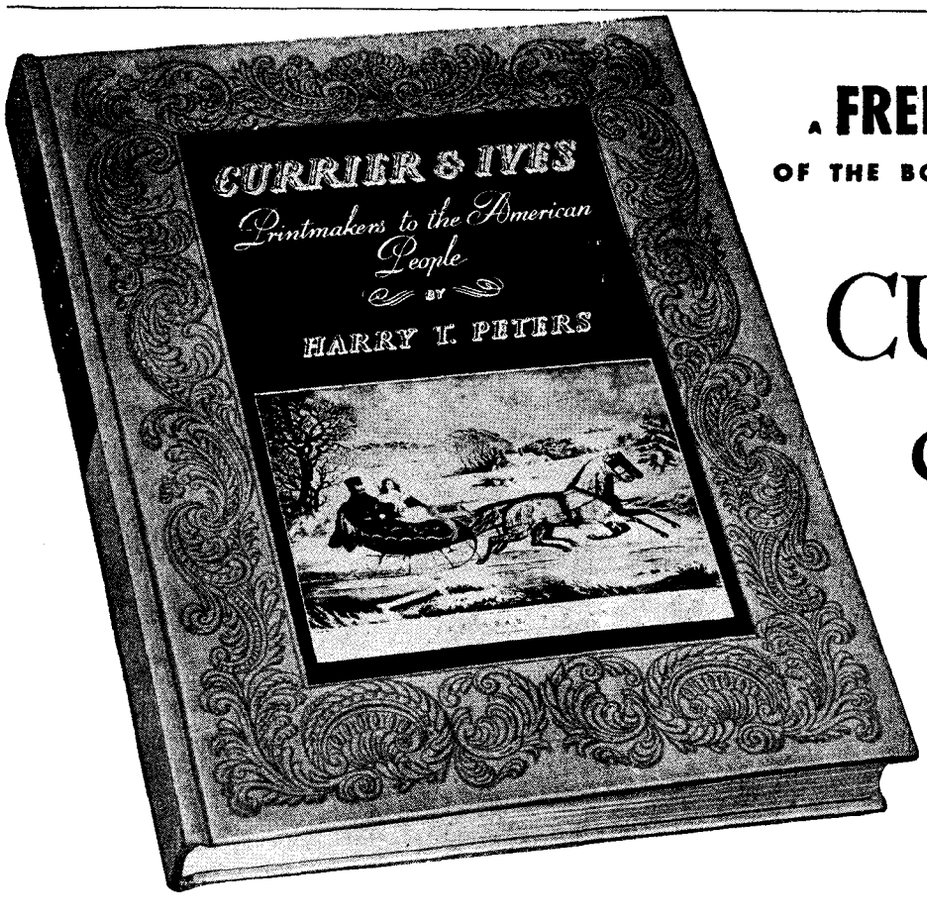

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